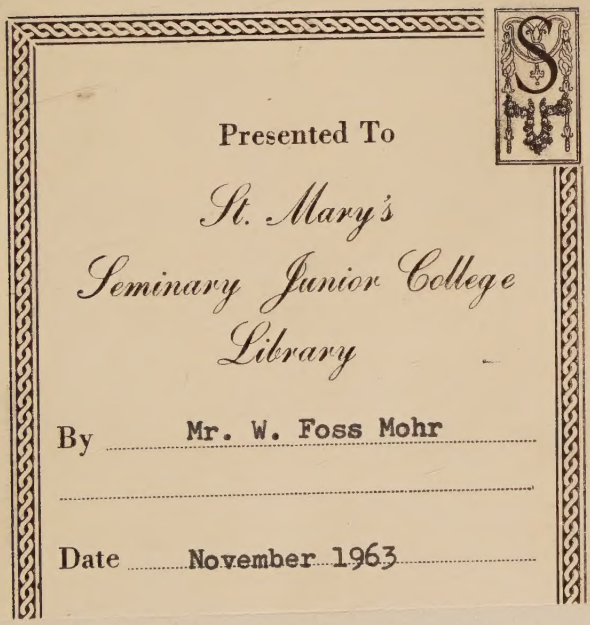
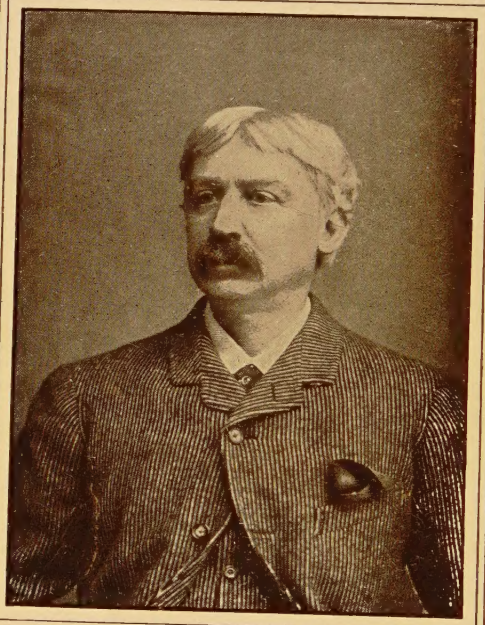
SHORT STORY CLASSICS

AMERICAN

PROPERTY OF ST. MARY'S
SEMINARY JUNIOR COLLEGE





Bret Harte

SHORT STORY CLASSICS

(AMERICAN)

VOLUME TWO

EDITED BY

William Patten

WITH
AN INTRODUCTION
AND NOTES

P. F. COLLIER & SON
NEW YORK

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/shortstoryclassi0002will_p4x4

12802

WHO WAS SHE?

BY BAYARD TAYLOR

James Bayard Taylor (born at Kennett Square, Pa., in 1825; died in 1878) was probably in his day the best American example of the all-round literary craftsman. He was poet, novelist, journalist, writer of books of travel, translator, and, in general, magazine writer. Says Albert H. Smith in the volume on Taylor in the "American Men of Letters" series: "He was a man of talent, and master of the mechanics of his craft. On all sides he touched the life of his time." Henry A. Beers, in his "Initial Studies in American Letters," says that in his short stories, as in his novels, "Taylor's pictorial skill is greater, on the whole, than his power of creating characters or inventing plots." In the present selection, however, he has both conceived an original type of character in the mysterious heroine, and invented an ingenious situation, if not plot, and so, in one instance at least, has achieved a short story classic.

WHO WAS SHE?

BY BAYARD TAYLOR

COME, now, there may as well be an end of this! Every time I meet your eyes squarely, I detect the question just slipping out of them. If you had spoken it, or even boldly looked it; if you had shown in your motions the least sign of a fussy or fidgety concern on my account; if this were not the evening of my birthday, and you the only friend who remembered it; if confession were not good for the soul, though harder than sin to some people, of whom I am one—well, if all reasons were not at this instant converged into a focus, and burning me rather violently, in that region where the seat of emotion is supposed to lie, I should keep my trouble to myself.

Yes, I have fifty times had it on my mind to tell you the whole story. But who can be certain that his best friend will not smile—or, what is worse, cherish a kind of charitable pity ever afterward—when the external forms of a very serious kind of passion seem trivial, fantastic, foolish? And the worst of all is that the heroic part which I imagined I was playing proves to have been almost the reverse. The only comfort which I can find in my humiliation is that I am capable of feeling it. There isn't a bit of a paradox in this, as you will see; but I only mention it, now,

Reprinted by permission. From "The Atlantic Monthly" for September, 1874.

to prepare you for, maybe, a little morbid sensitiveness of my moral nerves.

The documents are all in this portfolio under my elbow. I had just read them again completely through when you were announced. You may examine them as you like afterward: for the present, fill your glass, take another Cabaña, and keep silent until my "ghastly tale" has reached its most lamentable conclusion.

The beginning of it was at Wampsocket Springs, three years ago last summer. I suppose most unmarried men who have reached, or passed, the age of thirty—and I was then thirty-three—experience a milder return of their adolescent warmth, a kind of fainter second spring, since the first has not fulfilled its promise. Of course, I wasn't clearly conscious of this at the time: who is? But I had had my youthful passion and my tragic disappointment, as you know: I had looked far enough into what Thackeray used to call the cryptic mysteries to save me from the Scylla of dissipation, and yet preserved enough of natural nature to keep me out of the Pharisaic Charybdis. My devotion to my legal studies had already brought me a mild distinction; the paternal legacy was a good nest-egg for the incubation of wealth—in short, I was a fair, respectable "party," desirable to the humbler mammas, and not to be despised by the haughty exclusives.

The fashionable hotel at the Springs holds three hundred, and it was packed. I had meant to lounge there for a fortnight and then finish my holidays at Long Branch; but eighty, at least, out of the three hundred

were young and moved lightly in muslin. With my years and experience I felt so safe that to walk, talk, or dance with them became simply a luxury, such as I had never—at least so freely—possessed before. My name and standing, known to some families, were agreeably exaggerated to the others, and I enjoyed that supreme satisfaction which a man always feels when he discovers, or imagines, that he is popular in society. There is a kind of premonitory apology implied in my saying this, I am aware. You must remember that I am culprit, and culprit's counsel, at the same time.

You have never been at Wampsocket? Well, the hills sweep around in a crescent, on the northern side, and four or five radiating glens, descending from them, unite just above the village. The central one, leading to a waterfall (called "Minne-hehe" by the irreverent young people, because there is so little of it), is the fashionable drive and promenade; but the second ravine on the left, steep, crooked, and cumbered with bowlders which have tumbled from somewhere and lodged in the most extraordinary groupings, became my favorite walk of a morning. There was a footpath in it, well-trodden at first, but gradually fading out as it became more like a ladder than a path, and I soon discovered that no other city feet than mine were likely to scale a certain rough slope which seemed the end of the ravine. With the aid of the tough laurel-stems I climbed to the top, passed through a cleft as narrow as a doorway, and presently found myself in a little upper dell, as wild and sweet and

strange as one of the pictures that haunts us on the brink of sleep.

There was a pond—no, rather a bowl—of water in the centre; hardly twenty yards across, yet the sky in it was so pure and far down that the circle of rocks and summer foliage inclosing it seemed like a little planetary ring, floating off alone through space. I can't explain the charm of the spot, nor the selfishness which instantly suggested that I should keep the discovery to myself. Ten years earlier I should have looked around for some fair spirit to be my "minister," but now—

One forenoon—I think it was the third or fourth time I had visited the place—I was startled to find the dent of a heel in the earth, half-way up the slope. There had been rain during the night and the earth was still moist and soft. It was the mark of a woman's boot, only to be distinguished from that of a walking-stick by its semicircular form. A little higher, I found the outline of a foot, not so small as to awake an ecstasy, but with a suggestion of lightness, elasticity, and grace. If hands were thrust through holes in a board-fence, and nothing of the attached bodies seen, I can easily imagine that some would attract and others repel us: with footprints the impression is weaker, of course, but we can not escape it. I am not sure whether I wanted to find the unknown wearer of the boot within my precious personal solitude: I was afraid I should see her, while passing through the rocky crevice, and yet was disappointed when I found no one.

But on the flat, warm rock overhanging the tarn—my special throne—lay some withering wild-flowers and a book! I looked up and down, right and left: there was not the slightest sign of another human life than mine. Then I lay down for a quarter of an hour, and listened: there were only the noises of bird and squirrel, as before. At last, I took up the book, the flat breadth of which suggested only sketches. There were, indeed, some tolerable studies of rocks and trees on the first pages; a few not very striking caricatures, which seemed to have been commenced as portraits, but recalled no faces I knew; then a number of fragmentary notes, written in pencil. I found no name, from first to last; only, under the sketches, a monogram so complicated and laborious that the initials could hardly be discovered unless one already knew them.

The writing was a woman's, but it had surely taken its character from certain features of her own: it was clear, firm, individual. It had nothing of that air of general debility which usually marks the manuscript of young ladies, yet its firmness was far removed from the stiff, conventional slope which all Englishwomen seem to acquire in youth and retain through life. I don't see how any man in my situation could have helped reading a few lines—if only for the sake of restoring lost property. But I was drawn on, and on, and finished by reading all: thence, since no further harm could be done, I reread, pondering over certain passages until they stayed with me. Here they are, as I set them down, that evening, on the back of a legal blank:

"It makes a great deal of difference whether we wear social forms as bracelets or handcuffs."

"Can we not still be wholly our independent selves, even while doing, in the main, as others do? I know two who are so; but they are married."

"The men who admire these bold, dashing young girls treat them like weaker copies of themselves. And yet they boast of what they call 'experience'!"

"I wonder if any one felt the exquisite beauty of the noon as I did to-day? A faint appreciation of sunsets and storms is taught us in youth, and kept alive by novels and flirtations; but the broad, imperial splendor of this summer noon!—and myself standing alone in it—yes, utterly alone!"

"The men I seek *must* exist: where are they? How make an acquaintance, when one obsequiously bows himself away, as I advance? The fault is surely not all on my side."

There was much more, intimate enough to inspire me with a keen interest in the writer, yet not sufficiently so to make my perusal a painful indiscretion. I yielded to the impulse of the moment, took out my pencil, and wrote a dozen lines on one of the blank pages. They ran something in this wise:

"IGNOTUS IGNOTÆ!—You have bestowed without intending it, and I have taken without your knowledge. Do not regret the accident which has enriched another. This concealed idyl of the hills was mine, as I supposed, but I acknowledge your equal right to it. Shall we share the possession, or will you banish me?"

There was a frank advance, tempered by a proper caution, I fancied, in the words I wrote. It was evi-

dent that she was unmarried, but outside of that certainty there lay a vast range of possibilities, some of them alarming enough. However, if any nearer acquaintance should arise out of the incident, the next step must be taken by her. Was I one of the men she sought? I almost imagined so—certainly hoped so.

I laid the book on the rock, as I had found it, bestowed another keen scrutiny on the lonely landscape, and then descended the ravine. That evening, I went early to the ladies' parlor, chatted more than usual with the various damsels whom I knew, and watched with a new interest those whom I knew not. My mind, involuntarily, had already created a picture of the unknown. She might be twenty-five, I thought; a reflective habit of mind would hardly be developed before that age. Tall and stately, of course; distinctly proud in her bearing, and somewhat reserved in her manners. Why she should have large dark eyes, with long dark lashes, I could not tell; but so I seemed to see her. Quite forgetting that I was (or had meant to be) *Ignotus*, I found myself staring rather significantly at one or the other of the young ladies, in whom I discovered some slight general resemblance to the imaginary character. My fancies, I must confess, played strange pranks with me. They had been kept in a coop so many years that now, when I suddenly turned them loose, their rickety attempts at flight quite bewildered me.

No! there was no use in expecting a sudden discovery. I went to the glen betimes, next morning: the book was gone and so were the faded flowers, but

some of the latter were scattered over the top of another rock, a few yards from mine. Ha! this means that I am not to withdraw, I said to myself: she makes room for me! But how to surprise her?—for by this time I was fully resolved to make her acquaintance, even though she might turn out to be forty, scraggy, and sandy-haired.

I knew no other way so likely as that of visiting the glen at all times of the day. I even went so far as to write a line of greeting, with a regret that our visits had not yet coincided, and laid it under a stone on the top of *her* rock. The note disappeared, but there was no answer in its place. Then I suddenly remembered her fondness for the noon hours, at which time she was "utterly alone." The hotel *table d'hôte* was at one o'clock: her family, doubtless, dined later, in their own rooms. Why, this gave me, at least, her place in society! The question of age, to be sure, remained unsettled; but all else was safe.

The next day I took a late and large breakfast, and sacrificed my dinner. Before noon the guests had all straggled back to the hotel from glen and grove and lane, so bright and hot was the sunshine. Indeed, I could hardly have supported the reverberation of heat from the sides of the ravine, but for a fixed belief that I should be successful. While crossing the narrow meadow upon which it opened, I caught a glimpse of something white among the thickets higher up. A moment later it had vanished, and I quickened my pace, feeling the beginning of an absurd nervous excitement in my limbs. At the next turn, there it was

again! but only for another moment. I paused, exulting, and wiped my drenched forehead. "She can not escape me!" I murmured between the deep draughts of cooler air I inhaled in the shadow of a rock.

A few hundred steps more brought me to the foot of the steep ascent, where I had counted on overtaking her. I was too late for that, but the dry, baked soil had surely been crumbled and dislodged, here and there, by a rapid foot. I followed, in reckless haste, snatching at the laurel branches right and left, and paying little heed to my footing. About one-third of the way up I slipped, fell, caught a bush which snapped at the root, slid, whirled over, and before I fairly knew what had happened, I was lying doubled up at the bottom of the slope.

I rose, made two steps forward, and then sat down with a groan of pain; my left ankle was badly sprained, in addition to various minor scratches and bruises. There was a revulsion of feeling, of course—instant, complete, and hideous. I fairly hated the Unknown. "Fool that I was!" I exclaimed, in the theatrical manner, dashing the palm of my hand softly against my brow: "lured to this by the fair traitress! But, no! —not fair: she shows the artfulness of faded, desperate spinsterhood; she is all compact of enamel, 'liquid bloom of youth' and hair dye!"

There was a fierce comfort in this thought, but it couldn't help me out of the scrape. I dared not sit still, lest a sunstroke should be added, and there was no resource but to hop or crawl down the rugged path, in the hope of finding a forked sapling from

which I could extemporize a crutch. With endless pain and trouble I reached a thicket, and was feebly working on a branch with my pen-knife, when the sound of a heavy footstep surprised me.

A brown harvest-hand, in straw hat and shirt-sleeves, presently appeared. He grinned when he saw me, and the thick snub of his nose would have seemed like a sneer at any other time.

"Are you the gentleman that got hurt?" he asked. "Is it pretty tolerable bad?"

"Who said I was hurt?" I cried, in astonishment.

"One of your town-women from the hotel—I reckon she was. I was binding oats, in the field over the ridge; but I haven't lost no time in comin' here."

While I was stupidly staring at this announcement, he whipped out a big clasp-knife, and in a few minutes fashioned me a practicable crutch. Then, taking me by the other arm, he set me in motion toward the village.

Grateful as I was for the man's help, he aggravated me by his ignorance. When I asked if he knew the lady, he answered: "It's more'n likely *you* know her better." But where did she come from? Down from the hill, he guessed, but it might ha' been up the road. How did she look? was she old or young? what was the color of her eyes? of her hair? There, now, I was too much for him. When a woman kept one o' them speckled veils over her face, turned her head away, and held her parasol between, how were you to know her from Adam? I declare to you, I couldn't arrive at one positive particular. Even when he affirmed that

she was tall, he added, the next instant: "Now I come to think on it, she stepped mighty quick; so I guess she must ha' been short."

By the time we reached the hotel, I was in a state of fever; opiates and lotions had their will of me for the rest of the day. I was glad to escape the worry of questions, and the conventional sympathy expressed in inflections of the voice which are meant to soothe, and only exasperate. The next morning, as I lay upon my sofa, restful, patient, and properly cheerful, the waiter entered with a bouquet of wild flowers.

"Who sent them?" I asked.

"I found them outside your door, sir. Maybe there's a card; yes, here's a bit o' paper."

I opened the twisted slip he handed me, and read: "From your dell—and mine." I took the flowers; among them were two or three rare and beautiful varieties which I had only found in that one spot. Fool, again! I noiselessly kissed, while pretending to smell them, had them placed on a stand within reach, and fell into a state of quiet and agreeable contemplation.

Tell me, yourself, whether any male human being is ever too old for sentiment, provided that it strikes him at the right time and in the right way! What did that bunch of wild flowers betoken? Knowledge, first; then, sympathy; and finally, encouragement, at least. Of course she had seen my accident, from above; of course she had sent the harvest laborer to aid me home. It was quite natural she should imagine some special, romantic interest in the lonely dell, on my

part, and the gift took additional value from her conjecture.

Four days afterward, there was a hop in the large dining-room of the hotel. Early in the morning, a fresh bouquet had been left at my door. I was tired of my enforced idleness, eager to discover the fair unknown (she was again fair, to my fancy!), and I determined to go down, believing that a cane and a crimson velvet slipper on the left foot would provoke a glance of sympathy from certain eyes, and thus enable me to detect them.

The fact was, the sympathy was much too general and effusive. Everybody, it seemed, came to me with kindly greetings; seats were vacated at my approach, even fat Mrs. Huxter insisting on my taking her warm place, at the head of the room. But Bob Leroy—you know him—as gallant a gentleman as ever lived, put me down at the right point, and kept me there. He only meant to divert me, yet gave me the only place where I could quietly inspect all the younger ladies, as dance or supper brought them near.

One of the dances was an old-fashioned cotillon, and one of the figures, the "coquette," brought every one, in turn, before me. I received a pleasant word or two from those whom I knew, and a long, kind, silent glance from Miss May Danvers. Where had been my eyes? She was tall, stately, twenty-five, had large dark eyes, and long dark lashes! Again the changes of the dance brought her near me; I threw (or strove to throw) unutterable meanings into my eyes, and cast them upon hers. She seemed startled, looked sud-

denly away, looked back to me, and—blushed. I knew her for what is called "a nice girl"—that is, tolerably frank, gently feminine, and not dangerously intelligent. Was it possible that I had overlooked so much character and intellect?

As the cotillon closed, she was again in my neighborhood, and her partner led her in my direction. I was rising painfully from my chair, when Bob Leroy pushed me down again, whisked another seat from somewhere, planted it at my side, and there she was!

She knew who was her neighbor, I plainly saw; but instead of turning toward me, she began to fan herself in a nervous way and to fidget with the buttons of her gloves. I grew impatient.

"Miss Danvers!" I said, at last.

"Oh!" was all her answer, as she looked at me for a moment.

"Where are your thoughts?" I asked.

Then she turned, with wide, astonished eyes, coloring softly up to the roots of her hair. My heart gave a sudden leap.

"How can you tell, if I can not?" she asked.

"May I guess?"

She made a slight inclination of the head, saying nothing. I was then quite sure.

"The second ravine to the left of the main drive?"

This time she actually started; her color became deeper, and a leaf of the ivory fan snapped between her fingers.

"Let there be no more a secret!" I exclaimed.

"Your flowers have brought me your messages; I knew I should find you—"

Full of certainty, I was speaking in a low, impassioned voice. She cut me short by rising from her seat; I felt that she was both angry and alarmed. Fisher, of Philadelphia, jostling right and left in his haste, made his way toward her. She fairly snatched his arm, clung to it with a warmth I had never seen expressed in a ballroom, and began to whisper in his ear. It was not five minutes before he came to me, alone, with a very stern face, bent down, and said:

"If you have discovered our secret, you will keep silent. You are certainly a gentleman."

I bowed, coldly and savagely. There was a draught from the open window; my ankle became suddenly weary and painful, and I went to bed. Can you believe that I didn't guess, immediately, what it all meant? In a vague way, I fancied that I had been premature in my attempt to drop our mutual incognito, and that Fisher, a rival lover, was jealous of me. This was rather flattering than otherwise; but when I limped down to the ladies' parlor, the next day, no Miss Danvers was to be seen. I did not venture to ask for her; it might seem importunate, and a woman of so much hidden capacity was evidently not to be wooed in the ordinary way.

So another night passed by; and then, with the morning, came a letter which made me feel, at the same instant, like a fool and a hero. It had been dropped in the Wampsocket post-office, was legibly addressed to me and delivered with some other letters

which had arrived by the night mail. Here it is; listen!

"NOTO IGNOTA!—Haste is not a gift of the gods, and you have been impatient, with the usual result. I was almost prepared for this, and thus am not wholly disappointed. In a day or two more you will discover your mistake, which, so far as I can learn, has done no particular harm. If you wish to find *me*, there is only one way to seek me; should I tell you what it is, I should run the risk of losing you—that is, I should preclude the manifestation of a certain quality which I hope to find in the man who may—or, rather, must—be my friend. This sounds enigmatical, yet you have read enough of my nature, as written in those random notes in my sketch-book, to guess, at least, how much I require. Only this let me add: mere guessing is useless.

"Being unknown, I can write freely. If you find me, I shall be justified; if not, I shall hardly need to blush, even to myself, over a futile experiment.

"It is possible for me to learn enough of your life, henceforth, to direct my relation toward you. This may be the end; if so, I shall know it soon. I shall also know whether you continue to seek me. Trusting in your honor as a man, I must ask you to trust in mine, as a woman."

I *did* discover my mistake, as the Unknown promised. There had been a secret betrothal between Fisher and Miss Danvers, and, singularly enough, the momentous question and answer had been given in the very ravine leading to my upper dell! The two meant to keep the matter to themselves; but therein, it seems, I thwarted them; there was a little opposition on the part of their respective families, but all was amicably settled before I left Wampsocket.

The letter made a very deep impression upon me. What was the one way to find her? What could it be but the triumph that follows ambitious toil—the manifestation of all my best qualities as a man? Be she old or young, plain or beautiful, I reflected, hers

is surely a nature worth knowing, and its candid intelligence conceals no hazards for me. I have sought her rashly, blundered, betrayed that I set her lower, in my thoughts, than her actual self: let me now adopt the opposite course, seek her openly no longer, go back to my tasks, and, following my own aims vigorously and cheerfully, restore that respect which she seemed to be on the point of losing. For, consciously or not, she had communicated to me a doubt, implied in the very expression of her own strength and pride. She had meant to address me as an equal, yet, despite herself, took a stand a little above that which she accorded to me.

I came back to New York earlier than usual, worked steadily at my profession and with increasing success, and began to accept opportunities (which I had previously declined) of making myself personally known to the great, impressible, fickle, tyrannical public. One or two of my speeches in the hall of the Cooper Institute, on various occasions—as you may perhaps remember—gave me a good headway with the party, and were the chief cause of my nomination for the State office which I still hold. (There, on the table, lies a resignation, written to-day, but not yet signed. We'll talk of it afterward.) Several months passed by, and no further letter reached me. I gave up much of my time to society, moved familiarly in more than one province of the kingdom here, and vastly extended my acquaintance, especially among the women; but not one of them betrayed the mysterious something or other—really I can't explain precisely

what it was!—which I was looking for. In fact, the more I endeavored quietly to study the sex, the more confused I became.

At last, I was subjected to the usual onslaught from the strong-minded. A small but formidable committee entered my office one morning and demanded a categorical declaration of my principles. What my views on the subject were, I knew very well; they were clear and decided; and yet, I hesitated to declare them! It wasn't a temptation of Saint Anthony—that is, turned the other way—and the belligerent attitude of the dames did not alarm me in the least; but *she!* What was *her* position? How could I best please her? It flashed upon my mind, while Mrs. —— was making her formal speech, that I had taken no step for months without a vague, secret reference to *her.* So I strove to be courteous, friendly, and agreeably noncommittal; begged for further documents, and promised to reply by letter in a few days.

I was hardly surprised to find the well-known hand on the envelope of a letter shortly afterward. I held it for a minute in my palm, with an absurd hope that I might sympathetically feel its character before breaking the seal. Then I read it with a great sense of relief.

"I have never assumed to guide a man, except toward the full exercise of his powers. It is not opinion in action, but opinion in a state of idleness or indifference, which repels me. I am deeply glad that you have gained so much since you left the country. If, in shaping your course, you have thought of me, I will frankly say that, *to that extent,* you have drawn

nearer. Am I mistaken in conjecturing that you wish to know my relation to the movement concerning which you were recently interrogated? In this, as in other instances which may come, I must beg you to consider me only as a spectator. The more my own views may seem likely to sway your action, the less I shall be inclined to declare them. If you find this cold or unwomanly, remember that it is not easy!"

Yes! I felt that I had certainly drawn much nearer to her. And from this time on, her imaginary face and form became other than they were. She was twenty-eight—three years older; a very little above the middle height, but not tall; serene, rather than stately, in her movements; with a calm, almost grave face, relieved by the sweetness of the full, firm lips; and finally eyes of pure, limpid gray, such as we fancy belonged to the Venus of Milo. I found her thus much more attractive than with the dark eyes and lashes—but she did not make her appearance in the circles which I frequented.

Another year slipped away. As an official personage, my importance increased, but I was careful not to exaggerate it to myself. Many have wondered (perhaps you among the rest) at my success, seeing that I possess no remarkable abilities. If I have any secret, it is simply this—doing faithfully, with all my might, whatever I undertake. Nine-tenths of our politicians become inflated and careless, after the first few years, and are easily forgotten when they once lose place.

I am a little surprised now that I had so much patience with the Unknown. I was too important, at least, to be played with; too mature to be subjected to a longer test; too earnest, as I had

proved, to be doubted, or thrown aside without a further explanation.

Growing tired, at last, of silent waiting, I bethought me of advertising. A carefully written "Personal," in which *Ignotus* informed *Ignota* of the necessity of his communicating with her, appeared simultaneously in the "Tribune," "Herald," "World," and "Times." I renewed the advertisement as the time expired without an answer, and I think it was about the end of the third week before one came, through the post, as before.

Ah, yes! I had forgotten. See! my advertisement is pasted on the note, as a heading or motto for the manuscript lines. I don't know why the printed slip should give me a particular feeling of humiliation as I look at it, but such is the fact. What she wrote is all I need read to you:

"I could not, at first, be certain that this was meant for me. If I were to explain to you why I have not written for so long a time, I might give you one of the few clews which I insist on keeping in my own hands. In your public capacity, you have been (so far as a woman may judge) upright, independent, wholly manly: in your relations with other men I learn nothing of you that is not honorable: toward women you are kind, chivalrous, no doubt, overflowing with the *usual* social refinements, but— Here, again, I run hard upon the absolute necessity of silence. The way to me, if you care to traverse it, is so simple, so very simple! Yet, after what I have written, I can not even wave my hand in the direction of it, without certain self-contempt. When I feel free to tell you, we shall draw apart and remain unknown forever.

"You desire to write? I do not prohibit it. I have heretofore made no arrangement for hearing from you, in turn, because I could not discover that any advantage would accrue from it. But it seems only fair, I confess, and you dare not think me capricious. So, three days hence, at six o'clock in the evening, a trusty messenger of mine will call at your door. If you have

anything to give her for me, the act of giving it must be the sign of a compact on your part that you will allow her to leave immediately, unquestioned and unfollowed."

You look puzzled, I see: you don't catch the real drift of her words? Well, that's a melancholy encouragement. Neither did I, at the time: it was plain that I had disappointed her in some way, and my intercourse with or manner toward women had something to do with it. In vain I ran over as much of my later social life as I could recall. There had been no special attention, nothing to mislead a susceptible heart; on the other side, certainly no rudeness, no want of "chivalrous" (she used the word!) respect and attention. What, in the name of all the gods, was the matter?

In spite of all my efforts to grow clearer, I was obliged to write my letter in a rather muddled state of mind. I had *so* much to say! sixteen folio pages, I was sure, would only suffice for an introduction to the case; yet, when the creamy vellum lay before me and the moist pen drew my fingers toward it, I sat stock dumb for half an hour. I wrote, finally, in a half-desperate mood, without regard to coherency or logic. Here's a rough draft of a part of the letter, and a single passage from it will be enough:

"I can conceive of no simpler way to you than the knowledge of your name and address. I have drawn airy images of you, but they do not become incarnate, and I am not sure that I should recognize you in the brief moment of passing. Your nature is not of those which are instantly legible. As an abstract power, it has wrought in my life and it continually moves my heart with desires which are unsatisfactory because so vague and ignorant. Let me offer you, personally, my gratitude, my earnest friendship: you would laugh if I were *now* to offer more."

Stay! here is another fragment, more reckless in tone:

"I want to find the woman whom I can love—who can love me. But this is a masquerade where the features are hidden, the voice disguised, even the hands grotesquely gloved. Come! I will venture more than I ever thought was possible to me. You shall know my deepest nature as I myself seem to know it. Then, give me the commonest chance of learning yours, through an intercourse which shall leave both free, should we not feel the closing of the inevitable bond!"

After I had written that, the pages filled rapidly. When the appointed hour arrived, a bulky epistle, in a strong linen envelope, sealed with five wax seals, was waiting on my table. Precisely at six there was an announcement: the door opened, and a little outside, in the shadow, I saw an old woman, in a threadbare dress of rusty black.

"Come in!" I said.

"The letter!" answered a husky voice. She stretched out a bony hand, without moving a step.

"It is for a lady—very important business," said I, taking up the letter; "are you sure that there is no mistake?"

She drew her hand under the shawl, turned without a word, and moved toward the hall door.

"Stop!" I cried: "I beg a thousand pardons! Take it—take it! You are the right messenger!"

She clutched it, and was instantly gone.

Several days passed, and I gradually became so nervous and uneasy that I was on the point of inserting another "Personal" in the daily papers, when the answer arrived. It was brief and mysterious; you shall hear the whole of it:

"I thank you. Your letter is a sacred confidence which I pray you never to regret. Your nature is sound and good. You ask no more than is reasonable, and I have no real right to refuse. In the one respect which I have hinted, *I* may have been unskilful or too narrowly cautious: I must have the certainty of this. Therefore, as a generous favor, give me six months more! At the end of that time I will write to you again. Have patience with these brief lines: another word might be a word too much."

You notice the change in her tone? The letter gave me the strongest impression of a new, warm, almost anxious interest on her part. My fancies, as first at Wampsocket, began to play all sorts of singular pranks: sometimes she was rich and of an old family, sometimes moderately poor and obscure, but always the same calm, reposeful face and clear gray eyes. I ceased looking for her in society, quite sure that I should not find her, and nursed a wild expectation of suddenly meeting her, face to face, in the most unlikely places and under startling circumstances. However, the end of it all was patience—patience for six months.

There's not much more to tell; but this last letter is hard for me to read. It came punctually, to a day. I knew it would, and at the last I began to dread the time, as if a heavy note were falling due, and I had no funds to meet it. My head was in a whirl when I broke the seal. The fact in it stared at me blankly, at once, but it was a long time before the words and sentences became intelligible.

"The stipulated time has come, and our hidden romance is at an end. Had I taken this resolution a year ago, it would have saved me many vain hopes, and you, perhaps, a little uncertainty. Forgive me, first, if you can, and then hear the explanation:

"You wished for a personal interview: *you have had, not one, but many.* We have met, in society, talked face to face, discussed the weather, the opera, toilettes, Queechy, Aurora Floyd, Long Branch and Newport, and exchanged a weary amount of fashionable gossip; and you never guessed that I was governed by any deeper interest! I have purposely uttered ridiculous platitudes, and you were as smilingly courteous as if you enjoyed them: I have let fall remarks whose hollowness and selfishness could not have escaped you, and have waited in vain for a word of sharp, honest, manly reproof. Your manner to me was unexceptionable, as it was to all other women: but there lies the source of my disappointment, of—yes—of my sorrow!

"You appreciate, I can not doubt, the qualities in woman which men value in one another—culture, independence of thought, a high and earnest apprehension of life; but you know not how to seek them. It is not true that a mature and unperverted woman is flattered by receiving only the general obsequiousness which most men give to the whole sex. In the man who contradicts and strives with her, she discovers a truer interest, a nobler respect. The empty-headed, spindle-shanked youths who dance admirably, understand something of billiards, much less of horses, and still less of navigation, soon grow inexpressibly wearisome to us; but the men who adopt their social courtesy, never seeking to arouse, uplift, instruct us, are a bitter disappointment.

"What would have been the end, had you really found me? Certainly a sincere, satisfying friendship. No mysterious magnetic force has drawn you to me or held you near me, nor has my experiment inspired me with an interest which can not be given up without a personal pang. I am grieved, for the sake of all men and all women. Yet, understand me! I mean no slightest reproach. I esteem and honor you for what you are. Farewell!"

There! Nothing could be kinder in tone, nothing more humiliating in substance. I was sore and offended for a few days; but I soon began to see, and ever more and more clearly, that she was wholly right. I was sure, also, that any further attempt to correspond with her would be vain. It all comes of taking society just as we find it, and supposing that conven-

tional courtesy is the only safe ground on which men and women can meet.

The fact is—there's no use in hiding it from myself (and I see, by your face, that the letter cuts into your own conscience)—she is a free, courageous, independent character, and—I am not.

But who *was* she?

MADEMOISELLE OLYMPE ZABRISKI

BY THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

Thomas Bailey Aldrich (born at Portsmouth, N. H., Nov. 11, 1836) is an artist to his finger tips, whether working in verse or prose. His short story of a non-existent heroine, "Marjorie Daw," has been repeatedly mentioned by the critics as a masterpiece of dainty workmanship. Consequently most readers are familiar with it. It gave title to a volume of short stories, one of which, the present selection, hardly deserved to be thrust in this manner into the background. Its dénouement is fully as ingenious and unexpected as that of "Marjorie Daw," and it is led up to with an art that is just as illusory. The reader, too, is relieved at the final shattering of the romance, where, in the same case with "Marjorie Daw," he can hardly bring himself to forgive the author.

MADEMOISELLE OLYMPE ZABRISKI

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

I

WE are accustomed to speak with a certain light irony of the tendency which women have to gossip, as if the sin itself, if it is a sin, were of the gentler sex, and could by no chance be a masculine peccadillo. So far as my observation goes, men are as much given to small talk as women, and it is undeniable that we have produced the highest type of gossiper extant. Where will you find, in or out of literature, such another droll, delightful, chatty busybody as Samuel Pepys, Esq., Secretary to the Admiralty in the reigns of those fortunate gentlemen Charles II and James II of England? He is the king of tattlers, as Shakespeare is the king of poets.

If it came to a matter of pure gossip, I would back Our Club against the Sorosis or any women's club in existence. Whenever you see in your drawing-room four or five young fellows lounging in easy chairs, cigar in hand, and now and then bringing their heads together over the small round Japanese table which is always the pivot of these social circles, you may be sure that they are discussing Tom's engagement, or Dick's extravagance, or Harry's hopeless

Copyright, 1873 and 1901, by Thomas Bailey Aldrich. Published by special arrangement with Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., publishers of Mr. Aldrich's works.

passion for the younger Miss Fleurdelys. It is here old Tippleton gets execrated for that everlasting *bon mot* of his which was quite a success at dinner-parties forty years ago; it is here the belle of the season passes under the scalpels of merciless young surgeons; it is here B's financial condition is handled in a way that would make B's hair stand on end; it is here, in short, that everything is canvassed—everything that happens in our set, I mean—much that never happens, and a great deal that could not possibly happen. It was at Our Club that I learned the particulars of the Van Twiller affair.

It was great entertainment to Our Club, the Van Twiller affair, though it was rather a joyless thing, I fancy, for Van Twiller. To understand the case fully, it should be understood that Ralph Van Twiller is one of the proudest and most sensitive men living. He is a lineal descendant of Wouter Van Twiller, the famous old Dutch governor of New York—Nieuw Amsterdam, as it was then; his ancestors have always been burgomasters or admirals or generals, and his mother is the Mrs. Vanrensselaer Vanzandt Van Twiller whose magnificent place will be pointed out to you on the right bank of the Hudson as you pass up the historic river toward Idlewild. Ralph is about twenty-five years old. Birth made him a gentleman, and the rise of real estate—some of it in the family since the old governor's time—made him a millionaire. It was a kindly fairy that stepped in and made him a good fellow also. Fortune, I take it, was in her most jocund mood when she heaped her

gifts in this fashion on Van Twiller, who was, and will be again, when this cloud blows over, the flower of Our Club.

About a year ago there came a whisper—if the word "whisper" is not too harsh a term to apply to what seemed a mere breath floating gently through the atmosphere of the billiard-room—imparting the intelligence that Van Twiller was in some kind of trouble. Just as everybody suddenly takes to wearing square-toed boots, or to drawing his neckscarf through a ring, so it became all at once the fashion, without any preconcerted agreement, for everybody to speak of Van Twiller as a man in some way under a cloud. But what the cloud was, and how he got under it, and why he did not get away from it, were points that lifted themselves into the realm of pure conjecture. There was no man in the club with strong enough wing to his imagination to soar to the supposition that Van Twiller was embarrassed in money matters. Was he in love? That appeared nearly as improbable; for if he had been in love all the world—that is, perhaps a hundred first families—would have known all about it instantly.

"He has the symptoms," said Delaney, laughing. "I remember once when Jack Fleming—"

"Ned!" cried Flemming, "I protest against any allusion to that business."

This was one night when Van Twiller had wandered into the club, turned over the magazines absently in the reading-room, and wandered out again without speaking ten words. The most careless eye

would have remarked the great change that had come over Van Twiller. Now and then he would play a game of billiards with De Peyster or Haseltine, or stop to chat a moment in the vestibule with old Duane; but he was an altered man. When at the club, he was usually to be found in the small smoking-room upstairs, seated on a fauteuil fast asleep, with the last number of "The Nation" in his hand. Once, if you went to two or three places of an evening, you were certain to meet Van Twiller at them all. You seldom met him in society now.

By and by came whisper number two—a whisper more emphatic than number one, but still untraceable to any tangible mouthpiece. This time the whisper said that Van Twiller *was* in love. But with whom? The list of possible Mrs. Van Twillers was carefully examined by experienced hands, and a check placed against a fine old Knickerbocker name here and there, but nothing satisfactory arrived at. Then that same still small voice of rumor, but now with an easily detected staccato sharpness to it, said that Van Twiller was in love—with an actress! Van Twiller, whom it had taken all these years and all this waste of raw material in the way of ancestors to bring to perfection —Ralph Van Twiller, the net result and flower of his race, the descendant of Wouter, the son of Mrs. Vanrensselaer Vanzandt Van Twiller—in love with an actress! That was too ridiculous to be believed—and so everybody believed it.

Six or seven members of the club abruptly discovered in themselves an unsuspected latent passion

J. B. Aldrich.

for the histrionic art. In squads of two or three they stormed successively all the theatres in town—Booth's, Wallack's, Daly's Fifth Avenue (not burned down then), and the Grand Opera House. Even the shabby homes of the drama over in the Bowery, where the Germanic Thespis has not taken out his naturalization papers, underwent rigid exploration. But no clew was found to Van Twiller's mysterious attachment. The *opéra bouffe,* which promised the widest field for investigation, produced absolutely nothing, not even a crop of suspicions. One night, after several weeks of this, Delaney and I fancied that we caught sight of Van Twiller in the private box of an uptown theatre, where some thrilling trapeze performance was going on, which we did not care to sit through; but we concluded afterward that it was only somebody who looked like him. Delaney, by the way, was unusually active in this search. I dare say he never quite forgave Van Twiller for calling him Muslin Delaney. Ned is fond of ladies' society, and that's a fact.

The Cimmerian darkness which surrounded Van Twiller's inamorata left us free to indulge in the wildest conjectures. Whether she was black-tressed Melpomene, with bowl and dagger, or Thalia, with the fair hair and the laughing face, was only to be guessed at. It was popularly conceded, however, that Van Twiller was on the point of forming a dreadful *mésalliance.*

Up to this period he had visited the club regularly. Suddenly he ceased to appear. He was not to be seen

on Fifth Avenue, or in the Central Park, or at the houses he generally frequented. His chambers—and mighty comfortable chambers they were—on Thirty-fourth Street were deserted. He had dropped out of the world, shot like a bright particular star from his orbit in the heaven of the best society.

The following conversation took place one night in the smoking-room:

"Where's Van Twiller?"

"Who's seen Van Twiller?

"What has become of Van Twiller?"

Delaney picked up the "Evening Post," and read—with a solemnity that betrayed young Firkins into exclaiming, "By Jove, now!—"

"Married, on the 10th instant, by the Rev. Friar Laurence, at the residence of the bride's uncle, Montague Capulet, Esq., Miss Adrienne Le Couvreur to Mr. Ralph Van Twiller, both of this city. No cards."

"Free List suspended," murmured De Peyster.

"It strikes me," said Frank Livingstone, who had been ruffling the leaves of a magazine at the other end of the table, "that you fellows are in a great fever about Van Twiller."

"So we are."

"Well, he has simply gone out of town."

"Where?"

"Up to the old homestead on the Hudson."

"It's an odd time of year for a fellow to go into the country."

"He has gone to visit his mother," said Livingstone.

"In February?"

"I didn't know, Delaney, that there was any statute in force prohibiting a man from visiting his mother in February if he wants to."

Delaney made some light remark about the pleasure of communing with Nature with a cold in her head, and the topic was dropped.

Livingstone was hand in glove with Van Twiller, and if any man shared his confidence it was Livingstone. He was aware of the gossip and speculation that had been rife in the club, but he either was not at liberty or did not think it worth while to relieve our curiosity. In the course of a week or two it was reported that Van Twiller was going to Europe; and go he did. A dozen of us went down to the "Scythia" to see him off. It was refreshing to have something as positive as the fact that Van Twiller had sailed.

II

Shortly after Van Twiller's departure the whole thing came out. Whether Livingstone found the secret too heavy a burden, or whether it transpired through some indiscretion on the part of Mrs. Vanrensselaer Vanzandt Van Twiller, I can not say; but one evening the entire story was in the possession of the club.

Van Twiller had actually been very deeply interested—not in an actress, for the legitimate drama was not her humble walk in life, but — in Mademoiselle Olympe Zabriski, whose really perilous feats on the trapeze had astonished New York the year before,

though they had failed to attract Delaney and me the night we wandered into the up-town theatre on the trail of Van Twiller's mystery.

That a man like Van Twiller should be fascinated even for an instant by a common circus-girl seems incredible; but it is always the incredible thing that happens. Besides, Mademoiselle Olympe was not a common circus-girl; she was a most daring and startling gymnaste, with a beauty and a grace of movement that gave to her audacious performance almost an air of prudery. Watching her wondrous dexterity and pliant strength, both exercised without apparent effort, it seemed the most natural proceeding in the world that she should do those unpardonable things. She had a way of melting from one graceful posture into another like the dissolving figures thrown from a stereopticon. She was a lithe, radiant shape out of the Grecian mythology, now poised up there above the gaslights, and now gleaming through the air like a slender gilt arrow.

I am describing Mademoiselle Olympe as she appeared to Van Twiller on the first occasion when he strolled into the theatre where she was performing. To me she was a girl of eighteen or twenty years of age (maybe she was much older, for pearl powder and distance keep these people perpetually young), slightly but exquisitely built, with sinews of silver wire; rather pretty, perhaps, after a manner, but showing plainly the effects of the exhaustive draughts she was making on her physical vitality. Now, Van Twiller was an enthusiast on the subject of calisthenics. "If

I had a daughter," Van Twiller used to say, "I wouldn't send her to a boarding school, or a nunnery; I'd send her to a gymnasium for the first five years. Our American women have no physique. They are lilies, pallid, pretty—and perishable. You marry an American woman, and what do you marry? A headache. Look at English girls. They are at least roses, and last the season through."

Walking home from the theatre that first night, it flitted through Van Twiller's mind that if he could give this girl's set of nerves and muscles to any one of the two hundred high-bred women he knew, he would marry her on the spot and worship her forever.

The following evening he went to see Mademoiselle Olympe again. "Olympe Zabriski," he soliloquized as he sauntered through the lobby—"what a queer name! Olympe is French and Zabriski is Polish. It is her *nom de guerre,* of course; her real name is probably Sarah Jones. What kind of creature can she be in private life, I wonder? I wonder if she wears that costume all the time, and if she springs to her meals from a horizontal bar. Of course she rocks the baby to sleep on the trapeze." And Van Twiller went on making comical domestic tableaux of Mademoiselle Zabriski, like the clever, satirical dog he was, until the curtain rose.

This was on a Friday. There was a matinée the next day, and he attended that, though he had secured a seat for the usual evening entertainment. Then it became a habit of Van Twiller's to drop into the theatre for half an hour or so every night, to assist at the

interlude, in which she appeared. He cared only for her part of the programme, and timed his visits accordingly. It was a surprise to himself when he reflected, one morning, that he had not missed a single performance of Mademoiselle Olympe for nearly two weeks.

"This will never do," said Van Twiller. "Olympe"—he called her Olympe, as if she were an old acquaintance, and so she might have been considered by that time—"is a wonderful creature; but this will never do. Van, my boy, you must reform this altogether."

But half-past nine that night saw him in his accustomed orchestra chair, and so on for another week. A habit leads a man so gently in the beginning that he does not perceive he is led—with what silken threads and down what pleasant avenues it leads him! By and by the soft silk threads become iron chains, and the pleasant avenues Avernus!

Quite a new element had lately entered into Van Twiller's enjoyment of Mademoiselle Olympe's ingenious feats—a vaguely born apprehension that she might slip from that swinging bar; that one of the thin cords supporting it might snap, and let her go headlong from the dizzy height. Now and then, for a terrible instant, he would imagine her lying a glittering, palpitating heap at the foot-lights, with no color in her lips! Sometimes it seemed as if the girl were tempting this kind of fate. It was a hard, bitter life, and nothing but poverty and sordid misery at home could have driven her to it. What if she should end it all some night, by just unclasping that little

hand? It looked so small and white from where Van Twiller sat!

This frightful idea fascinated while it chilled him, and helped to make it nearly impossible for him to keep away from the theatre. In the beginning his attendance had not interfered with his social duties or pleasures; but now he came to find it distasteful after dinner to do anything but read, or walk the streets aimlessly, until it was time to go to the play. When that was over, he was in no mood to go anywhere but to his rooms. So he dropped away by insensible degrees from his habitual haunts, was missed, and began to be talked about at the club. Catching some intimation of this, he ventured no more in the orchestra stalls, but shrouded himself behind the draperies of the private box in which Delaney and I thought we saw him on one occasion.

Now, I find it very perplexing to explain what Van Twiller was wholly unable to explain to himself. He was not in love with Mademoiselle Olympe. He had no wish to speak to her, or to hear her speak. Nothing could have been easier, and nothing further from his desire, than to know her personally. A Van Twiller personally acquainted with a strolling female acrobat! Good heavens! That was something possible only with the discovery of perpetual motion. Taken from her theatrical setting, from her lofty perch, so to say, on the trapeze-bar, Olympe Zabriski would have shocked every aristocratic fibre in Van Twiller's body. He was simply fascinated by her marvelous grace and *élan,* and the magnetic recklessness of the girl. It

was very young in him and very weak, and no member of the Sorosis, or all the Sorosisters together, could have been more severe on Van Twiller than he was on himself. To be weak, and to know it, is something of a punishment for a proud man. Van Twiller took his punishment, and went to the theatre, regularly.

"When her engagement comes to an end," he meditated, "that will finish the business."

Mademoiselle Olympe's engagement finally did come to an end and she departed. But her engagement had been highly beneficial to the treasury-chest of the uptown theatre, and before Van Twiller could get over missing her she had returned from a short Western tour, and her immediate reappearance was underlined on the play-bills.

On a dead wall opposite the windows of Van Twiller's sleeping-room there appeared, as if by necromancy, an aggressive poster with MADEMOISELLE OLYMPE ZABRISKI on it in letters at least a foot high. This thing stared him in the face when he woke up one morning. It gave him a sensation as if she had called on him overnight and left her card.

From time to time through the day he regarded that poster with a sardonic eye. He had pitilessly resolved not to repeat the folly of the previous month. To say that this moral victory cost him nothing would be to deprive it of merit. It cost him many internal struggles. It is a fine thing to see a man seizing his temptation by the throat, and wrestling with it, and trampling it underfoot like St. Anthony. This was the spectacle Van Twiller was exhibiting to the angels.

The evening Mademoiselle Olympe was to make her reappearance, Van Twiller, having dined at the club, and feeling more like himself than he had felt for weeks, returned to his chamber, and, putting on dressing-gown and slippers, piled up the greater portion of his library about him, and fell to reading assiduously. There is nothing like a quiet evening at home with some slight intellectual occupation, after one's feathers have been stroked the wrong way.

When the lively French clock on the mantelpiece—a base of malachite surmounted by a flying bronze Mercury with its arms spread gracefully in the air, and not remotely suggestive of Mademoiselle Olympe in the act of executing her grand flight from the trapeze—when the clock, I repeat, struck nine, Van Twiller paid no attention to it. That was certainly a triumph. I am anxious to render Van Twiller all the justice I can, at this point of the narrative, inasmuch as when the half hour sounded musically, like a crystal ball dropping into a silver bowl, he rose from the chair automatically, thrust his feet into his walking-shoes, threw his overcoat across his arm, and strode out of the room.

To be weak and to scorn your weakness, and not to be able to conquer it, is, as has been said, a hard thing; and I suspect it was not with unalloyed satisfaction that Van Twiller found himself taking his seat in the back part of the private box night after night during the second engagement of Mademoiselle Olympe. It was so easy not to stay away!

In this second edition of Van Twiller's fatuity, his case was even worse than before. He not only thought

of Olympe quite a number of times between breakfast and dinner, he not only attended the interlude regularly, but he began, in spite of himself, to occupy his leisure hours at night by dreaming of her. This was too much of a good thing, and Van Twiller regarded it so. Besides, the dream was always the same—a harrowing dream, a dream singularly adapted to shattering the nerves of a man like Van Twiller. He would imagine himself seated at the theatre (with all the members of Our Club in the parquette), watching Mademoiselle Olympe as usual, when suddenly that young lady would launch herself desperately from the trapeze, and come flying through the air like a firebrand hurled at his private box. Then the unfortunate man would wake up with cold drops standing on his forehead.

There is one redeeming feature in this infatuation of Van Twiller's which the sober moralist will love to look upon—the serene unconsciousness of the person who caused it. She went through her *rôle* with admirable aplomb, drew her salary, it may be assumed, punctually, and appears from first to last to have been ignorant that there was a miserable slave wearing her chains nightly in the left-hand proscenium box.

That Van Twiller, haunting the theatre with the persistency of an ex-actor, conducted himself so discreetly as not to draw the fire of Mademoiselle Olympe's blue eyes shows that Van Twiller, however deeply under a spell, was not in love. I say this, though I think if Van Twiller had not been Van Twiller, if he had been a man of no family and no position

and no money, if New York had been Paris and Thirty-fourth Street a street in the Latin Quarter—but it is useless to speculate on what might have happened. What did happen is sufficient.

It happened, then, in the second week of Queen Olympe's second unconscious reign, that an appalling Whisper floated up the Hudson, effected a landing at a point between Spuyten Duyvil Creek and Cold Spring, and sought out a stately mansion of Dutch architecture standing on the bank of the river. The Whisper straightway informed the lady dwelling in this mansion that all was not well with the last of the Van Twillers; that he was gradually estranging himself from his peers, and wasting his nights in a playhouse watching a misguided young woman turning unmaidenly somersaults on a piece of wood attached to two ropes.

Mrs. Vanrensselaer Vanzandt Van Twiller came down to town by the next train to look into this little matter.

She found the flower of the family taking an early breakfast at 11 A. M., in his cosey apartments on Thirty-fourth Street. With the least possible circumlocution she confronted him with what rumor had reported of his pursuits, and was pleased, but not too much pleased, when he gave her an exact account of his relations with Mademoiselle Zabriski, neither concealing nor qualifying anything. As a confession, it was unique, and might have been a great deal less entertaining. Two or three times in the course of the narrative, the matron had some difficulty in preserving the gravity of her countenance. After meditating a

few minutes, she tapped Van Twiller softly on the arm with the tip of her parasol, and invited him to return with her the next day up the Hudson and make a brief visit at the home of his ancestors. He accepted the invitation with outward alacrity and inward disgust.

When this was settled, and the worthy lady had withdrawn, Van Twiller went directly to the establishment of Messrs. Ball, Black, and Company, and selected, with unerring taste, the finest diamond bracelet procurable. For his mother? Dear me, no! She had the family jewels.

I would not like to state the enormous sum Van Twiller paid for this bracelet. It was such a clasp of diamonds as would have hastened the pulsation of a patrician wrist. It was such a bracelet as Prince Camaralzaman might have sent to the Princess Badoura, and the Princess Badoura—might have been very glad to get.

In the fragrant Levant morocco case, where these happy jewels lived when they were at home, Van Twiller thoughtfully placed his card, on the back of which he had written a line begging Mademoiselle Olympe Zabriski to accept the accompanying trifle from one who had witnessed her graceful performances with interest and pleasure. This was not done inconsiderately. "Of course, I must inclose my card, as I would to any lady," Van Twiller had said to himself. "A Van Twiller can neither write an anonymous letter nor make an anonymous present." Blood entails its duties as well as its privileges.

The casket despatched to its destination, Van Twil-

ler felt easier in his mind. He was under obligations to the girl for many an agreeable hour that might otherwise have passed heavily. He had paid the debt, and he had paid it *en prince,* as became a Van Twiller. He spent the rest of the day in looking at some pictures at Goupil's, and at the club, and in making a few purchases for his trip up the Hudson. A consciousness that this trip up the Hudson was a disorderly retreat came over him unpleasantly at intervals.

When he returned to his rooms late at night, he found a note lying on the writing-table. He started as his eyes caught the words "—— Theatre" stamped in carmine letters on one corner of the envelope. Van Twiller broke the seal with trembling fingers.

Now, this note some time afterward fell into the hands of Livingstone, who showed it to Stuyvesant, who showed it to Delaney, who showed it to me, and I copied it as a literary curiosity. The note ran as follows:

MR VAN TWILLER DEAR SIR—i am verry greatfull to you for that Bracelett. it come just in the nic of time for me. The Mademoiselle Zabriski dodg is about Plaid out. my beard is getting to much for me. i shall have to grow a mustash and take to some other line of busyness, i dont no what now, but will let you no. You wont feel bad if i sell that Bracelett. i have seen Abrahams Moss and he says he will do the square thing. Pleas accep my thanks for youre Beautifull and Unexpected present. Youre respectfull servent,

CHARLES MONTMORENCI WALTERS.

The next day Van Twiller neither expressed nor felt any unwillingness to spend a few weeks with his mother at the old homestead.

And then he went abroad.

BROTHER SEBASTIAN'S FRIENDSHIP

BY HAROLD FREDERIC

I WHO tell this story am called Brother Sebastian. This name was given me more than forty years ago, while Louis Philippe was still king. My other name has been buried so long that I have nearly forgotten it. I think that my people are dead. At least I have heard nothing from them in many years. My reputation has always been that of a misanthrope—if not that, then of a dreamer. In the seminary I had no intimates. In the order, for I am a Brother of the Christian Schools, my associates are polite—nothing more. I seem to be outside their social circles, their plans, their enjoyments. True, I am an old man now. But in other years it was the same. All my life I have been in solitude.

To this there is a single exception—one star shining in the blackness. And my career has been so bleak that, although it ended in deeper sadness than I had known before, I look back to the epsiode with gratitude. The bank of clouds which shut out this sole light of my life quickened its brilliancy before they submerged it.

After the terrible siege of '71, when the last German was gone, and our houses had breasted the ordeal of the Commune, I was sent to the South. The

By permission of the "Utica Observer."

Superior thought my cheeks were ominously hollow, and suspected threats of consumption in my cough. So I was to go to the Mediterranean, and try its milder air. I liked the change. Paris, with its gloss of noisy gayety and its substance of sceptical heartlessness, was repugnant to me. Perhaps it was because of this that Brother Sebastian had been mured up in the capital two-thirds of his life. If our surroundings are too congenial we neglect the work set before us. But no matter; to the coast I went.

My new home was a long-established house, spacious, venerable, and dreary. It was on the outskirts of an ancient town, which was of far more importance before our Lord was born than it has ever been since. We had little to do. There were nine brothers, a handful of resident orphans, and some threescore pupils. Ragged, stupid, big-eyed urchins they were, altogether different from the keen Paris boys. For that matter, every feature of my new home was odd. The heat of the summer was scorching in its intensity. The peasants were much more respectful to our cloth, and, as to appearance, looked like figures from Murillo's canvases. The foliage, the wine, the language, the manners of the people—everything was changed. This interested me, and my morbidness vanished. The Director was delighted with my improved condition. Poor man! he was positive that my cheeks had puffed out perceptibly after the first two months. So the winter came—a mild, wet, muggy winter, wholly unlike my favorite sharp season in the North.

We were killing time in the library one afternoon,

the Director and a Swiss Brother sitting by the lamp reading, I standing at one of the tall, narrow windows, drumming on the panes and dreaming. The view was not an inspiring one. There was a long horizontal line of pale yellow sky and another of flat, black land, out of which an occasional poplar raised itself solemnly. The great mass below the stripes was brown; above, gloomy gray. Close under the window two boys were playing in the garden of the house. I recall distinctly that they threw armfuls of wet fallen leaves at each other with a great shouting. While I stood thus, the Brother Servitor, Abonus, came in and whispered to the Director. He always whispered. It was not fraternal, but I did not like this Abonus.

"Send him up here," said the Director. Then I remembered that I had heard the roll of a carriage and the bell ring a few moments before. Abonus came in again. Behind him there was some one else, whose footsteps had the hesitating sound of a stranger's. Then I heard the Director's voice:

"You are from Algiers?"—"I am, Brother."

"Your name?"

"Edouard, Brother."

"Well, tell me more."

"I was under orders to be in Paris in January, Brother. As my health was poor, I received permission to come back to France this autumn. At Marseilles I was instructed to come here. So I am here. I have these papers from the Mother house, and from Etienne, Director, of Algiers."

Something in the voice seemed peculiar to me. I turned and examined the new-comer. He stood behind and to one side of the Director, who was laboriously deciphering some papers through his big horn spectacles. The light was not very bright, but there was enough to see a wonderfully handsome face, framed in dazzling black curls. Perhaps it looked the more beautiful because contrasted with the shaven gray poll and surly features of grim Abonus. But to me it was a dream of St. John the Evangel. The eyes of the face were lowered upon the Director, so I could only guess their brilliancy. The features were those of an extreme youth—round, soft, and delicate. The expression was one of utter fatigue, almost pain. It bore out the statement of ill-health.

The Director had finished his reading. He lifted his head now and surveyed the stranger in turn. Finally, stretching out his fat hand, he said:

"You are welcome, Brother Edouard. I see the letter says you have had no experience except with the youngest children. Brother Photius does that now. We will have you rest for a time. Then we will see about it. Meanwhile I will turn you over to the care of good Abonus, who will give you one of the north rooms."

So the two went out, Abonus shuffling his feet disagreeably. It was strange that he could do nothing to please me.

"Brother Sebastian," said the Director, as the door closed, "it is curious that they should have sent me a tenth man. Why, I lie awake now to invent pretences

of work for those I have already. I will give up all show of teaching presently, and give out that I keep a hospital—a retreat for ailing brothers. Still, this Edouard is a pretty boy."

"Very."

"Etienne's letter says he is twenty and a Savoyard. He speaks like a Parisian."

"Very likely he is seminary bred," put in the Swiss.

"Whatever he is, I like his looks," said our Superior. This good man liked every one. His was the placid, easy Alsatian nature, prone to find goodness in all things—even crabbed Abonus. The Director, or, as he was known, Brother Elysee, was a stout, round little man, with a fine face and imperturbable good spirits. He was adored by all his subordinates. But I fancy he did not advance in favor at Paris very rapidly.

I liked Edouard from the first. The day after he came we were together much, and, when we parted after vespers, I was conscious of a vast respect for this new-comer. He was bright, ready spoken, and almost a man of the world. Compared with my dull career, his short life had been one of positive gayety. He had seen Frederic le Maitre at the Comédie Française. He had been at Court and spoken with the Prince Imperial. He was on terms of intimacy with Monsignori, and had been a protégé of the sainted Darboy. It was a rare pleasure to hear him talk of these things.

Before this, the ceaseless shifting of brothers from

one house to another had been indifferent to me. For the hundreds of strangers who came and went in the Paris house on Oudinot Street I cared absolutely nothing. I did not suffer their entrance nor their exit to excite me. This was so much the case that they called me a machine. But with Edouard this was different. I grew to love the boy from the first evening, when, as he left my room, I caught myself saying, "I shall be sorry when he goes." He seemed to be fond of me, too. For that matter most of the brothers petted him, Elysee especially. But I was flattered that he chose me as his particular friend. For the first time my heart had opened.

We were alone one evening after the holidays. It was cold without, but in my room it was warm and bright. The fire crackled merrily, and the candles gave out a mellow and pleasant light. The Director had gone up to Paris, and his mantle had fallen on me. Edouard sat with his feet stretched to the fender, his curly head buried in the great curved back of my invalid chair, the red fire-light reflected on his childish features. I took pleasure in looking at him. He looked at the coals and knit his brows as if in a puzzle. I often fancied that something weightier than the usual troubles of life weighed upon him. At last he spoke, just as I was about to question him:

"Are you afraid to die, Sebastian?"

Not knowing what else to say, I answered, "No, my child."

"I wonder if you enjoy life in community?"

This was still stranger. I could but reply that I

had never known any other life; that I was fitted for nothing else.

"But still," persisted he, "would you not like to leave it—to have a career of your own before you die? Do you think this is what a man is created for—to give away his chance to live?"

"Edouard, you are interrogating your own conscience," I answered. "These are questions which you must have answered yourself, before you took your vows. When you answered them, you sealed them."

Perhaps I spoke too harshly, for he colored and drew up his feet. Such shapely little feet they were. I felt ashamed of my crustiness.

"But, Edouard," I added, "your vows are those of the novitiate. You are not yet twenty-eight. You have still the right to ask yourself these things. The world is very fair to men of your age. Do not dream that I was angry with you."

He sat gazing into the fire. His face wore a strange, far-away expression, as he reached forth his hand, in a groping way, and rested it on my knee, clutching the gown nervously. Then he spoke slowly, seeking for words, and keeping his eyes on the flames.

"You have been good to me, Brother Sebastian. Let me ask you: May I tell you something in confidence—something which shall never pass your lips? I mean it."

He had turned and poured those marvelous eyes into mine with irresistible magnetism. Of course

I said, "Speak!" and I said it without the slightest hesitation.

"I am not a Christian Brother. I do not belong to your order. I have no claim upon the hospitality of this roof. I am an impostor!"

He ejected these astounding sentences with an energy almost fierce, gripping my knee meanwhile. Then, as suddenly, his grasp relaxed, and he fell to weeping bitterly.

I stared at him solemnly, in silence. My tongue seemed paralyzed. Confusing thoughts whirled in a maze unbidden through my head. I could say nothing. But a strange impulse prompted me to reach out and take his hot hand in mine. It was piteous to hear him sobbing, his head upon his raised arm, his whole frame quivering with emotion. I had never seen any one weep like that before. So I sat dumb, trying in vain to answer this bewildering self-accusation. At last there came out of the folds of the chair the words, faint and tear-choked:

"You have promised me secrecy, and you will keep your word; but you will hate me."

"Why, no, no, Edouard, not hate you," I answered, scarcely knowing what I said. I did not comprehend it at all. There was nothing more for me to say. Finally, when some power of thought returned, I asked:

"Of all things, my poor boy, why should you choose such a dreary life as this? What possible reason led you to enter the community? What attractions has it for you?"

Edouard turned again from the fire to me. His eyes sparkled. His teeth were tight set.

"Why? Why? I will tell you why, Brother Sebastian. Can you not understand how a poor hunted beast should rejoice to find shelter in such an out-of-the-way place, among such kind men, in the grave of this cloister life? I have not told you half enough. Do you not know in the outside world, in Toulon, or Marseilles, or that fine Paris of yours, there is a price on my head?—or no, not that, but enemies that are looking for me, searching everywhere, turning every little stone for the poor privilege of making me suffer? And do you know that these enemies wear shakos, and are called gens d'armes? Would you be pleased to learn that it is a prison I escape by coming here? *Now*, will you hate me?"

The boy had risen from his chair. He spoke hurriedly, almost hysterically, his eyes snapping at mine like coals, his curls disheveled, his fingers curved and stiffened like the talons of a hawk. I had never seen such intense earnestness in a human face. Passions like these had never penetrated the convent walls before.

While I sat dumb before him, Edouard left the room. I was conscious of his exit only in a vague way. For hours I sat in my chair beside the grate thinking, or trying to think. You can see readily that I was more than a little perplexed. In the absence of Elysee, I was director. The management of the house, its good fame, its discipline, all rested on my shoulders. And to be confronted by such an abyss as

this! I could do absolutely nothing. The boy had tied my tongue by the pledge. Besides, had I been unsworn, I am sure the idea of exposure would never have come to me. It was late before I retired that night. And I recall with terrible distinctness the chaos of brain and faculty which ushered in a restless sleep almost as dawn was breaking.

I had fancied that Brother Edouard would find life intolerable in community after his revelation to me. He would be chary of meeting me before the brothers; would be constantly tortured by fear of detection. As I saw this prospect of the poor innocent—for it was absurd to think of him as anything else—dreading exposure at each step in his false life, shrinking from observation, biting his tongue at every word—I was greatly moved by pity. Judge my surprise, then, when I saw him the next morning join in the younger brothers' regular walk around the garden, joking and laughing as I had never seen before. On his right was thin, sickly Victor, rest his soul! and on the other pursy, thick-necked John, as merry a soul as Cork ever turned out. And how they laughed, even the frail consumptive! It was a pleasure to see his blue eyes brighten with enjoyment and his warm cheeks blush. Above John's queer, Irish chuckle, I heard Edouard's voice, with its dainty Parisian accent, retailing jokes and leading in the laughter. The tramp was stretched out longer than usual, so pleasant did they find it. At this development I was much amazed.

The same change was noticeable in all that Edouard did. Instead of the apathy with which he had dis-

charged his nominal duties, his baby pupils (for Photius had gone to Peru) now became bewitched with him. He told them droll stories, incited their rivalry in study by instituting prizes for which they struggled monthly, and, in short, metamorphosed his department. The change spread to himself. His cheeks took on a ruddier hue, the sparkle of his black eyes mellowed into a calm and steady radiance. There was no trace of feverish elation which, in solitude, recoiled to the brink of despair. He sang to himself evenings in his dormitory, clearly and with joy. His step was as elastic as that of any schoolboy. I often thought upon this change, and meditated how beautiful an illustration of confession's blessings it furnished. Frequently we were alone, but he never referred again to that memorable evening, even by implication. At first I dreaded to have the door close upon us, feeling that he must perforce seek to take up the thread where he had broken it then. But he talked of other things, and so easily and naturally that I felt embarrassed. For weeks I could not shake off the feeling that, at our next talk, he would broach the subject. But he never did.

Elysee returned, bringing me kind words from the Mother house, and a half-jocular hint that Superior General Philippe had me much in his mind. No doubt there had been a time when the idea of becoming a Director would have stirred my pulses. Surely it was gone now. I asked for nothing but to stay beside Edouard, to watch him, and to be near to lend him a helping hand when his hour of trouble should come.

From that ordeal, which I saw approaching clearly and certainly, I shrank with all my nerves on edge. As the object of my misery grew bright-eyed and strong, I felt myself declining in health. My face grew thin, and I could not eat. I saw before my eyes always this wretched boy singing upon the brow of the abyss. Sometimes I strove not to see his fall—frightful and swift. His secret seemed to harass him no longer. To me it was heavier than lead.

The evening the Brother Director returned, we sat together in the reading-room, the entire community. Elysee had been speaking of the Mother house concerning which Brother Barnabas, an odd little Lorrainer who spoke better German than French, and who regarded Paris with the true provincial awe and veneration, exhibited much curiosity. We had a visitor, a gaunt, self-sufficient old Parisian, who had spent fourteen days in the Mazas prison during the Commune. I will call him Brother Albert, for his true name in religion is very well known.

"I heard a curious story in the Vaugirard house," said the Brother Director, refreshing himself with a pinch of snuff, "which made the more impression upon me that I once knew intimately one of the persons in it. Martin Delette was my schoolmate at Pfalsbourg in the old days. A fine, studious lad he was, too. He took orders and went to the north, where he lived for many years a quiet country curé. He had a niece, a charming girl who is not now more than twenty or one-and-twenty. She was an orphan,

and lived with him, going to a convent to school and returning at vacations. She was not a bad girl, but a trifle wayward and easily led. She gave the Sisters much anxiety. Last spring she barely escaped compromising the house by an escapade with a young *miserable* of the town, named Banin."

"I know your story," said Albert, with an air which hinted that this was a sufficient reason why the rest should not hear it. "Banin is in prison."

Elysee proceeded: "The girl was reprimanded. Next week she disappeared. To one of her companions she had confided a great desire to see Paris. So good Father Delette was summoned, and, after a talk with the Superioress, started post-haste for the capital. He found no signs either of poor Renée or of Banin, who had also disappeared. The Curé was nearly heart-broken. Each day, they told me, added a year to his appearance. He did not cease to importune the police chiefs and to haunt the public places for a glimpse of his niece's face. But the summer came, and no Renée. The Curé began to cough and grow weak. But one day in August the Director, good Prosper, called him down to the reception-room to see a visitor.

" 'There is news for you,' " he whispered, pressing poor Martin's hand. In the room he found—"

"In the room he found—" broke in Albert, impertinently, but with a quiet tone of authority which cowed good Elysee, "a shabby man, looking like a poorly fed waiter. This person rose and said, 'I am a detective; do you know Banin—young man, tall,

blond, squints, broken tooth upper jaw, hat back on his head, much talk, hails from Rheims?'

"'Ah,' said Delette, 'I have not seen him, but I know him too well.'

"The detective pointed with his thumb over his left shoulder. 'He is in jail. He is good for twenty years. I did it myself. My name is So-and-so. Good job. Procurator said you were interested—some woman in the case, parishioner of yours, eh?'

"'My niece,' gasped the Curé.

"'O ho! does you credit; pretty girl, curly head. good manners. Well, she's off. Good trick, too. She was the decoy. Banin stood in the shadow with club. She brought gentleman into alley, friend did work. That's Banin's story. Perhaps a lie. You have a brother in Algiers? Thought so. Girl went out there once? So I was told. Probably there now. African officers say not; but they're a sleepy lot. If I was a criminal I'd go to Algiers. Good hiding. The detective went. Delette stood where he was in silence. I went to him, and helped carry him upstairs. We put him in his bed. He died there."

Brother Albert stopped. He had told the story, dialogue and all, like a machine. We did not doubt its correctness. The memory of Albert had passed into a proverb years before.

Brother Albert raised his eyes again, and added, as if he had not paused, "He was ashamed to hold his head up. He might well be."

A strange, excited voice rose from the other end of the room. I looked and saw that it was Edouard who

spoke. He had half arisen from his chair and scowled at Albert, throwing out his words with the tremulous haste of a young man first addressing an audience:

"Why should he be ashamed? Was he not a good man? Was the blame of his bad niece's acts his? From the story, she was well used and had no excuse. It is he who is to be pitied, not blamed!"

The Brother Director smiled benignly at the young enthusiast. "Brother Edouard is right," he said. "Poor Martin was to be compassioned. None the less, my heart is touched for the girl. In Banin's trial it appeared that he maltreated her, and forced her to do what she did by blows. They were really married. Her neighbors gave Renée a name for gentleness and a good heart. Poor thing!"

"And she never was found?" asked Abonus, eagerly. He spoke very rarely. He looked now at me as he spoke, and there was a strange, ungodly glitter in his eyes which made me shudder involuntarily.

"Never," replied the Director, "although there is a reward, 5,000 francs, offered for her recovery. Miserable child, who can tell what depths of suffering she may be in this moment?"

"It would be remarkable if she should be found now, after all this time," said Abonus, sharply. His wicked, squinting old eyes were still fastened upon me. This time, as by a flash of eternal knowledge, I read their meaning, and felt the ground slipping from under me.

I shall never forget the night that followed. I made no pretence of going to bed. Edouard's little

dormitory was in another part of the house. I went once to see him, but dared not knock, since Abonus was stirring about just across the hall, in his own den. I scratched on a piece of paper "Fly!" in the dark, and pushed it under the door. Then I returned to walk my chamber, chafing like a wild beast. Ah, that night, that night!

With the first cock crow in the village below, long before the bell, I left my room. I wanted air to breathe. I passed Abonus on the broad stairway. He strode up with unwonted vigor, bearing a heavy caldron of water as if it had been straw. His gown was tumbled and dusty; his greasy *rabat* hung awry about his neck. I had it in my head to speak with him, but could not. So the early hours, with devotions which I went through in a dream, wore on in horrible suspense, and breakfast came.

We sat at the long table, five on a side, the Director —looking red-eyed and weary from the evening's unaccustomed dissipation—sitting at the head. Below us stood Brother Albert, reading from Tertullian in a dry, monotonous chant. I recall, as I write, how I found a certain comfort in those splendid, sonorous Latin sentences, though I was conscious of not comprehending a word. I dreaded the moment they should end. Edouard sat beside me. We had not exchanged a word during the morning. How could I speak? What should I say? I was in a nervous flutter, like unto those who watch the final pinioning of a criminal whose guillotine is awaiting him. I could not keep my eyes from the fair face beside me, with

its delicately cut profile, made all the more cameo-like by its pallid whiteness. The lips were tightly compressed. I could see askant that the tiny nostrils were quivering with excitement. All else was impassive on Edouard's face. We two sat waiting for the axe to fall.

It is as distinct as a nightmare to me. Abonus came in with his great server laden with victuals. He stumbled as he approached. He too was excited. He drew near, and stood behind me. I seemed to feel his breath penetrate my skull; and yet I was forced to answer a whispered question of Brother John's with a smooth face. I saw Edouard suddenly reach for the milk glass in front of his plate, and hand it back to Abonus with the disdain of a duchess. He said, in a sharp, peremptory tone:

"Take it away and cleanse it. No one but a dirty monk would place such a glass on the table."

Albert ceased his reading. Abonus did not touch the glass. He shuffled hastily to the sideboard and deposited his burden. Then he came back with the same eager movement. He placed his fists on his hips, like a fish-woman, and hissed, in a voice choking with concentrated rage:

"No one but a woman would complain of it!"

The brothers stared at each other and the two speakers in mute surprise. But they saw nothing in the words beyond a personal wrangle—though even that was such a novelty as to arrest instant attention. I busied myself with my plate. The Director assumed his harshest tone, and asked the cause

of the altercation. Abonus leaned over and whispered something in his ear. I remember next a room full of confusion, a babel of conflicting voices, and a whirling glimpse of uniforms. Then I fainted.

When I revived I was in my own room, stretched upon my pallet. I looked around in a dazed way and saw the Brother Director and a young gendarme by the closed door. Something black and irregular in the outline of the bed at my side attracted my eyes. I saw that it was Edouard's head buried in the drapery. As in a dream I laid my numb hand upon those crisp curls. I was an old man, she was a weak, wretched girl. She raised her face at my touch, and burned in my brain a vision of stricken agony, of horrible soul-pain, which we liken, for want of a better simile, to the anguish in the eyes of a dying doe. Her lips moved; she said something, I know not what. Then she went, and I was left alone with Elysee. His words—broken, stumbling words—I remember:

"She asked to see you, Sebastian, my friend. I could not refuse. Her papers were forged. She did come from Algiers, where her uncle is a Capuchin. I do not ask, I do not wish to know, how much you know of this. Before my Redeemer, I feel nothing but pity for the poor lamb. Lie still, my friend; try to sleep. We are both older men than we were yesterday."

There is little else to tell. Only twice have reflections of this episode in my old life reached me in the seclusion of a missionary post at the foot of the Andes. I learned a few weeks ago that the wretched

Abonus had bought a sailor's café on the Toulon wharves with his five thousand francs. And I know also that the heart of the Marshal-President was touched by the sad story of Renée, and that she left the prison La Salpetrière to lay herself in penitence at the foot of Mother Church. This is the story of my friendship.

A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING

BY HJALMAR HJORTH BOYESEN

Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen (born at Frederiksværn, Norway, September 23, 1848; died in 1895) was a university graduate who came to this country in 1869 to take a professorship of languages in a small Ohio college. Soon after he was called to Cornell, and in 1882 he became Professor of German in Columbia. His proficiency in the English language was phenomenal. His mastery of scholarly English in the essay form was to be expected, but his ready command of the delicately shaded style required of a literary novelist has not been equaled by any other naturalized American author. Hence in this series he has received citizenship among those to the manner born. The story selected by his son, as representative of his work in brief fiction, is a fine study of character, with a pathetic ending, whose poignancy is due to its fidelity to truth.

A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING

BY HJALMAR HJORTH BOYESEN

I

RALPH GRIM was born a gentleman. He had the misfortune of coming into the world some ten years later than might reasonably have been expected. Colonel Grim and his lady had celebrated twelve anniversaries of their wedding-day, and had given up all hopes of ever having a son and heir, when this late comer startled them by his unexpected appearance. The only previous addition to the family had been a daughter, and she was then ten summers old.

Ralph was a very feeble child, and could only with great difficulty be persuaded to retain his hold of the slender thread which bound him to existence. He was rubbed with whiskey, and wrapped in cotton, and given mare's milk to drink, and God knows what not, and the Colonel swore a round oath of paternal delight when at last the infant stopped gasping in that distressing way and began to breathe like other human beings. The mother, who, in spite of her anxiety for the child's life, had found time to plot for him a career of future magnificence, now suddenly set him apart for literature, because that was the easiest road to fame, and disposed of him in marriage to one of the most distinguished families of the land. She cautiously

By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons. Copyright, 1876, by James R. Osgood & Co.

suggested this to her husband when he came to take his seat at her bedside; but to her utter astonishment she found that he had been indulging a similar train of thought, and had already destined the infant prodigy for the army. She, however, could not give up her predilection for literature, and the Colonel, who could not bear to be contradicted in his own house, as he used to say, was getting every minute louder and more flushed, when, happily, the doctor's arrival interrupted the dispute.

As Ralph grew up from infancy to childhood, he began to give decided promise of future distinction. He was fond of sitting down in a corner and sucking his thumb, which his mother interpreted as the sign of that brooding disposition peculiar to poets and men of lofty genius. At the age of five, he had become sole master in the house. He slapped his sister Hilda in the face, or pulled her hair, when she hesitated to obey him, tyrannized over his nurse, and sternly refused to go to bed in spite of his mother's entreaties. On such occasions, the Colonel would hide his face behind his newspaper, and chuckle with delight; it was evident that nature had intended his son for a great military commander. As soon as Ralph himself was old enough to have any thoughts about his future destiny, he made up his mind that he would like to be a pirate. A few months later, having contracted an immoderate taste for candy, he contented himself with the comparatively humble position of a baker; but when he had read "Robinson Crusoe" he manifested a strong desire to go to sea in the hope of being wrecked on

some desolate island. The parents spent long evenings gravely discussing these indications of uncommon genius, and each interpreted them in his or her own way.

"He is not like any other child I ever knew," said the mother.

"To be sure," responded the father, earnestly. "He is a most extraordinary child. I was a very remarkable child too, even if I do say it myself; but, as far as I remember, I never aspired to being wrecked on an uninhabited island."

The Colonel probably spoke the truth; but he forgot to take into account that he had never read "Robinson Crusoe."

Of Ralph's school-days there is but little to report, for, to tell the truth, he did not fancy going to school, as the discipline annoyed him. The day after his having entered the gymnasium, which was to prepare him for the Military Academy, the principal saw him waiting at the gate after his class had been dismissed. He approached him, and asked why he did not go home with the rest.

"I am waiting for the servant to carry my books," was the boy's answer.

"Give me your books," said the teacher.

Ralph reluctantly obeyed. That day the Colonel was not a little surprised to see his son marching up the street, and every now and then glancing behind him with a look of discomfort at the principal, who was following quietly in his train, carrying a parcel of school-books. Colonel Grim and his wife, divining

the teacher's intention, agreed that it was a great outrage, but they did not mention the matter to Ralph. Henceforth, however, the boy refused to be accompanied by his servant. A week later he was impudent to the teacher of gymnastics, who whipped him in return. The Colonel's rage knew no bounds; he rode in great haste to the gymnasium, reviled the teacher for presuming to chastise *his* son, and committed the boy to the care of a private tutor.

At the age of sixteen, Ralph went to the capital with the intention of entering the Military Academy. He was a tall, handsome youth, slender of stature, and carried himself as erect as a candle. He had a light, clear complexion of almost feminine delicacy; blond, curly hair, which he always kept carefully brushed; a low forehead, and a straight, finely modeled nose. There was an expression of extreme sensitiveness about the nostrils, and a look of indolence in the dark-blue eyes. But the *ensemble* of his features was pleasing, his dress irreproachable, and his manners bore no trace of the awkward self-consciousness peculiar to his age. Immediately on his arrival in the capital he hired a suite of rooms in the aristocratic part of the city, and furnished them rather expensively, but in excellent taste. From a bosom friend, whom he met by accident in the restaurant's pavilion in the park, he learned that a pair of antlers, a stuffed eagle, or falcon, and a couple of swords, were indispensable to a well-appointed apartment. He accordingly bought these articles at a curiosity shop. During the first weeks of his residence in the city he made

some feeble efforts to perfect himself in mathematics, in which he suspected he was somewhat deficient. But when the same officious friend laughed at him, and called him "green," he determined to trust to fortune, and henceforth devoted himself the more assiduously to the French ballet, where he had already made some interesting acquaintances.

The time for the examination came; the French ballet did not prove a good preparation; Ralph failed. It quite shook him for the time, and he felt humiliated. He had not the courage to tell his father; so he lingered on from day to day, sat vacantly gazing out of his window, and tried vainly to interest himself in the busy bustle down on the street. It provoked him that everybody else should be so light-hearted, when he was, or at least fancied himself, in trouble. The parlor grew intolerable; he sought refuge in his bedroom. There he sat one evening (it was the third day after the examination), and stared out upon the gray stone walls which on all sides inclosed the narrow courtyard. The round stupid face of the moon stood tranquilly dozing like a great Limburger cheese suspended under the sky.

Ralph, at least, could think of a no more fitting simile. But the bright-eyed young girl in the window hard by sent a longing look up to the same moon, and thought of her distant home on the fjords, where the glaciers stood like hoary giants, and caught the yellow moonbeams on their glittering shields of snow. She had been reading "Ivanhoe" all the afternoon, until the twilight had overtaken her quite unaware, and now

she suddenly remembered that she had forgotten to write her German exercise. She lifted her face and saw a pair of sad, vacant eyes gazing at her from the next window in the angle of the court. She was a little startled at first, but in the next moment she thought of her German exercise and took heart.

"Do you know German?" she said; then immediately repented that she had said it.

"I do," was the answer.

She took up her apron and began to twist it with an air of embarrassment.

"I didn't mean anything," she whispered, at last. "I only wanted to know."

"You are very kind."

That answer roused her; he was evidently making sport of her.

"Well, then, if you do, you may write my exercise for me. I have marked the place in the book."

And she flung her book over to the window, and he caught it on the edge of the sill, just as it was falling.

"You are a very strange girl," he remarked, turning over the leaves of the book, although it was too dark to read. "How old are you?"

"I shall be fourteen six weeks before Christmas," answered she, frankly.

"Then I excuse you."

"No, indeed," cried she, vehemently. "You needn't excuse me at all. If you don't want to write my exercise, you may send the book back again. I am very sorry I spoke to you, and I shall never do it again."

"But you will not get the book back again without the exercise," replied he, quietly. "Good-night."

The girl stood long looking after him, hoping that he would return. Then, with a great burst of repentance, she hid her face in her lap, and began to cry.

"Oh, dear, I didn't mean to be rude," she sobbed. "But it was Ivanhoe and Rebecca who upset me."

The next morning she was up before daylight, and waited for two long hours in great suspense before the curtain of his window was raised. He greeted her politely; threw a hasty glance around the court to see if he was observed, and then tossed her book dexterously over into her hands.

"I have pinned the written exercise to the flyleaf," he said. "You will probably have time to copy it before breakfast."

"I am ever so much obliged to you," she managed to stammer.

He looked so tall and handsome, and grown-up, and her remorse stuck in her throat, and threatened to choke her. She had taken him for a boy as he sat there in his window the evening before.

"By the way, what is your name?" he asked, carelessly, as he turned to go.

"Bertha."

"Well, my dear Bertha, I am happy to have made your acquaintance."

And he again made her a polite bow, and entered his parlor.

"How provokingly familiar he is," thought she; "but no one can deny that he is handsome."

The bright roguish face of the young girl haunted Ralph during the whole next week. He had been in love at least ten times before, of course; but, like most boys, with young ladies far older than himself. He found himself frequently glancing over to her window in the hope of catching another glimpse of her face; but the curtain was always drawn down, and Bertha remained invisible. During the second week, however, she relented, and they had many a pleasant chat together. He now volunteered to write all her exercises, and she made no objections. He learned that she was the daughter of a well-to-do peasant in the sea-districts of Norway (and it gave him quite a shock to hear it), and that she was going to school in the city, and boarded with an old lady who kept a *pension* in the house adjoining the one in which he lived.

One day in the autumn Ralph was surprised by the sudden arrival of his father, and the fact of his failure in the examination could no longer be kept a secret. The old Colonel flared up at once when Ralph made his confession; the large veins upon his forehead swelled; he grew coppery-red in his face, and stormed up and down the floor, until his son became seriously alarmed; but, to his great relief, he was soon made aware that his father's wrath was not turned against him personally, but against the officials of the Military Academy who had rejected him. The Colonel took it as insult to his own good name and irreproachable standing as an officer; he promptly refused any other explanation, and vainly racked his brain to remember if any youthful folly of his could possibly

have made him enemies among the teachers of the Academy. He at last felt satisfied that it was envy of his own greatness and rapid advancement which had induced the rascals to take vengeance on his son. Ralph reluctantly followed his father back to the country town where the latter was stationed, and the fair-haired Bertha vanished from his horizon. His mother's wish now prevailed, and he began, in his own easy way, to prepare himself for the University. He had little taste for Cicero, and still less for Virgil, but with the use of a "pony" he soon gained sufficient knowledge of these authors to be able to talk in a sort of patronizing way about them, to the great delight of his fond parents. He took quite a fancy, however, to the ode in Horace ending with the lines:

Dulce ridentem,
Dulce loquentem,
Lalagen amabo.

And in his thought he substituted for Lalage the fair-haired Bertha, quite regardless of the requirements of the metre.

To make a long story short, three years later Ralph returned to the capital, and, after having worn out several tutors, actually succeeded in entering the University.

The first year of college life is a happy time to every young man, and Ralph enjoyed its processions, its parliamentary gatherings, and its leisure, as well as the rest. He was certainly not the man to be sentimental over the loss of a young girl whom, moreover, he had only known for a few weeks. Nevertheless, he thought

of her at odd times, but not enough to disturb his pleasure. The standing of his family, his own handsome appearance, and his immaculate linen opened to him the best houses of the city, and he became a great favorite in society. At lectures he was seldom seen, but more frequently in the theatres, where he used to come in during the middle of the first act, take his station in front of the orchestra box, and eye, through his lorgnette, by turns, the actresses and the ladies of the parquet.

II

Two months passed, and then came the great annual ball which the students give at the opening of the second semester. Ralph was a man of importance that evening; first, because he belonged to a great family; secondly, because he was the handsomest man of his year. He wore a large golden star on his breast (for his fellow-students had made him a Knight of the Golden Boar) and a badge of colored ribbons in his buttonhole.

The ball was a brilliant affair, and everybody was in excellent spirits, especially the ladies. Ralph danced incessantly, twirled his soft mustache, and uttered amiable platitudes. It was toward midnight, just as the company was moving out to supper, that he caught the glance of a pair of dark-blue eyes, which suddenly drove the blood to his cheeks and hastened the beating of his heart. But when he looked once more the dark-blue eyes were gone, and his unruly heart went on hammering against his side. He laid his hand on

his breast and glanced furtively at his fair neighbor, but she looked happy and unconcerned, for the flavor of the ice cream was delicious. It seemed an endless meal, but, when it was done, Ralph rose, led his partner back to the ballroom, and hastily excused himself. His glance wandered round the wide hall, seeking the well-remembered eyes once more, and, at length, finding them in a remote corner, half hid behind a moving wall of promenaders. In another moment he was at Bertha's side.

"You must have been purposely hiding yourself, Miss Bertha," said he, when the usual greetings were exchanged. "I have not caught a glimpse of you all this evening, until a few moments ago."

"But I have seen you all the while," answered the girl, frankly. "I knew you at once as I entered the hall."

"If I had but known that you were here," resumed Ralph, as it were invisibly expanding with an agreeable sense of dignity, "I assure you, you would have been the very first one I should have sought."

She raised her large grave eyes to his, as if questioning his sincerity; but she made no answer.

"Good gracious!" thought Ralph. "She takes things terribly in earnest."

"You look so serious, Miss Bertha," said he, after a moment's pause. "I remember you as a bright-eyed, flaxen-haired little girl, who threw her German exercise-book to me across the yard, and whose merry laughter still rings pleasantly in my memory. I confess I don't find it quite easy to identify this grave

young lady with my merry friend of three years ago."

"In other words, you are disappointed at not finding me the same as I used to be."

"No, not exactly that; but—"

Ralph paused and looked puzzled. There was something in the earnestness of her manner which made a facetious compliment seem grossly inappropriate, and in the moment no other escape suggested itself.

"But what?" demanded Bertha, mercilessly.

"Have you ever lost an old friend?" asked he, abruptly.

"Yes; how so?"

"Then," answered he, while his features lighted up with a happy inspiration—"then you will appreciate my situation. I fondly cherished my old picture of you in my memory. Now I have lost it, and I can not help regretting the loss. I do not mean, however, to imply that this new acquaintance—this second edition of yourself, so to speak—will prove less interesting."

She again sent him a grave, questioning look, and began to gaze intently upon the stone in her bracelet.

"I suppose you will laugh at me," began she, while a sudden blush flitted over her countenance. "But this is my first ball, and I feel as if I had rushed into a whirlpool, from which I have, since the first rash plunge was made, been vainly trying to escape. I feel so dreadfully forlorn. I hardly know anybody here except my cousin, who invited me, and I hardly think I know him either."

"Well, since you are irredeemably committed,"

replied Ralph, as the music, after some prefatory flourishes, broke into the delicious rhythm of a Strauss waltz, "then it is no use struggling against fate. Come, let us make the plunge together. Misery loves company."

He offered her his arm, and she rose, somewhat hesitatingly, and followed.

"I am afraid," she whispered, as they fell into line with the procession that was moving down the long hall, "that you have asked me to dance merely because I said I felt forlorn. If that is the case, I should prefer to be led back to my seat."

"What a base imputation!" cried Ralph.

There was something so charmingly *naïve* in this self-depreciation—something so altogether novel in his experience, and, he could not help adding, just a little bit countrified. His spirits rose; he began to relish keenly his position as an experienced man of the world, and, in the agreeable glow of patronage and conscious superiority, chatted with hearty *abandon* with his little rustic beauty.

"If your dancing is as perfect as your German exercises were," said she, laughing, as they swung out upon the floor, "then I promise myself a good deal of pleasure from our meeting."

"Never fear," answered he, quickly reversing his step, and whirling with many a capricious turn away among the thronging couples.

When Ralph drove home in his carriage toward morning he briefly summed up his impressions of Bertha in the following adjectives: intelligent, de-

lightfully unsophisticated, a little bit verdant, but devilish pretty.

Some weeks later Colonel Grim received an appointment at the fortress of Aggershuus, and immediately took up his residence in the capital. He saw that his son cut a fine figure in the highest circles of society, and expressed his gratification in the most emphatic terms. If he had known, however, that Ralph was in the habit of visiting, with alarming regularity, at the house of a plebeian merchant in a somewhat obscure street, he would, no doubt, have been more chary of his praise. But the Colonel suspected nothing, and it was well for the peace of the family that he did not. It may have been cowardice in Ralph that he never mentioned Bertha's name to his family or to his aristocratic acquaintances; for, to be candid, he himself felt ashamed of the power she exerted over him, and by turns pitied and ridiculed himself for pursuing so inglorious a conquest. Nevertheless it wounded his egotism that she never showed any surprise at seeing him, that she received him with a certain frank unceremoniousness, which, however, was very becoming to her; that she invariably went on with her work heedless of his presence, and in everything treated him as if she had been his equal. She persisted in talking with him in a half sisterly fashion about his studies and his future career, warned him with great solicitude against some of his reprobate friends, of whose merry adventures he had told her; and if he ventured to compliment her on her beauty or her accomplishments, she would look up gravely from her sewing,

or answer him in a way which seemed to banish the idea of love-making into the land of the impossible. He was constantly tormented by the suspicion that she secretly disapproved of him, and that from a mere moral interest in his welfare she was conscientiously laboring to make him a better man. Day after day he parted from her feeling humiliated, faint-hearted, and secretly indignant both at himself and her, and day after day he returned only to renew the same experience. At last it became too intolerable, he could endure it no longer. Let it make or break, certainty, at all risks, was at least preferable to this sickening suspense. That he loved her, he could no longer doubt; let his parents foam and fret as much as they pleased; for once he was going to stand on his own legs. And in the end, he thought, they would have to yield, for they had no son but him.

Bertha was going to return to her home on the seacoast in a week. Ralph stood in the little low-ceiled parlor, as she imagined, to bid her good-by. They had been speaking of her father, her brothers, and the farm, and she had expressed the wish that if he ever should come to that part of the country he might pay them a visit. Her words had kindled a vague hope in his breast, but in their very frankness and friendly regard there was something which slew the hope they had begotten. He held her hand in his, and her large confiding eyes shone with an emotion which was beautiful, but was yet not love.

"If you were but a peasant born like myself," said she, in a voice which sounded almost tender, "then

I should like to talk to you as I would to my own brother; but—"

"No, not brother, Bertha," cried he, with sudden vehemence; "I love you better than I ever loved any earthly being, and if you knew how firmly this love has clutched at the roots of my heart, you would perhaps—you would at least not look so reproachfully at me."

She dropped his hand, and stood for a moment silent.

"I am sorry that it should have come to this, Mr. Grim," said she, visibly struggling for calmness. "And I am perhaps more to blame than you."

"Blame," muttered he, "why are you to blame?"

"Because I do not love you; although I sometimes feared that this might come. But then again I persuaded myself that it could not be so."

He took a step toward the door, laid his hand on the knob, and gazed down before him.

"Bertha," began he, slowly, raising his head, "you have always disapproved of me, you have despised me in your heart, but you thought you would be doing a good work if you succeeded in making a man of me."

"You use strong language," answered she, hesitatingly; "but there is truth in what you say."

Again there was a long pause, in which the ticking of the old parlor clock grew louder and louder.

"Then," he broke out at last, "tell me before we part if I can do nothing to gain—I will not say your love—but only your regard? What would you do if you were in my place?"

"My advice you will hardly heed, and I do not even know that it would be well if you did. But if I were a man in your position, I should break with my whole past, start out into the world where nobody knew me, and where I should be dependent only upon my own strength, and there I would conquer a place for myself, if it were only for the satisfaction of knowing that I was really a man. Here cushions are sewed under your arms, a hundred invisible threads bind you to a life of idleness and vanity, everybody is ready to carry you on his hands, the road is smoothed for you, every stone carefully moved out of your path, and you will probably go to your grave without having ever harbored one earnest thought, without having done one manly deed."

Ralph stood transfixed, gazing at her with open mouth; he felt a kind of stupid fright, as if some one had suddenly seized him by the shoulders and shaken him violently. He tried vainly to remove his eyes from Bertha. She held him as by a powerful spell. He saw that her face was lighted with an altogether new beauty; he noticed the deep glow upon her cheek, the brilliancy of her eye, the slight quiver of her lip. But he saw all this as one sees things in a half-trance, without attempting to account for them; the door between his soul and his senses was closed.

"I know that I have been bold in speaking to you in this way," she said at last, seating herself in a chair at the window. "But it was yourself who asked me. And I have felt all the time that I should have to tell you this before we parted."

"And," answered he, making a strong effort to appear calm, "if I follow your advice, will you allow me to see you once more before you go?"

"I shall remain here another week, and shall, during that time, always be ready to receive you."

"Thank you. Good-by."

"Good-by."

Ralph carefully avoided all the fashionable thoroughfares; he felt degraded before himself, and he had an idea that every man could read his humiliation in his countenance. Now he walked on quickly, striking the sidewalk with his heels; now, again, he fell into an uneasy, reckless saunter, according as the changing moods inspired defiance of his sentence, or a qualified surrender. And, as he walked on, the bitterness grew within him, and he piteously reviled himself for having allowed himself to be made a fool of by "that little country goose," when he was well aware that there were hundreds of women of the best families of the land who would feel honored at receiving his attentions. But this sort of reasoning he knew to be both weak and contemptible, and his better self soon rose in loud rebellion.

"After all," he muttered, "in the main thing she was right. I am a miserable good-for-nothing, a hothouse plant, a poor stick, and if I were a woman myself, I don't think I should waste my affections on a man of that calibre."

Then he unconsciously fell to analyzing Bertha's character, wondering vaguely that a person who moved so timidly in social life, appearing so diffident,

from an ever-present fear of blundering against the established forms of etiquette, could judge so quickly, and with such a merciless certainty, whenever a moral question, a question of right and wrong, was at issue. And, pursuing the same train of thought, he contrasted her with himself, who moved in the highest spheres of society as in his native element, heedless of moral scruples, and conscious of no loftier motive for his actions than the immediate pleasure of the moment.

As Ralph turned the corner of a street, he heard himself hailed from the other sidewalk by a chorus of merry voices.

"Ah, my dear Baroness," cried a young man, springing across the street and grasping Ralph's hand (all his student friends called him the Baroness), "in the name of this illustrious company, allow me to salute you. But why the deuce—what is the matter with you? If you have the *Katzenjammer*,* soda-water is the thing. Come along—it's my treat!"

The students instantly thronged around Ralph, who stood distractedly swinging his cane and smiling idiotically.

"I am not quite well," said he; "leave me alone."

"No, to be sure, you don't look well," cried a jolly youth, against whom Bertha had frequently warned him; "but a glass of sherry will soon restore you. It would be highly immoral to leave you in this condition without taking care of you."

* *Katzenjammer* is the sensation a man has the morning after a carousal.

Ralph again vainly tried to remonstrate; but the end was, that he reluctantly followed.

He had always been a conspicuous figure in the student world; but that night he astonished his friends by his eloquence, his reckless humor, and his capacity for drinking. He made a speech for "Woman," which bristled with wit, cynicism, and sarcastic epigrams. One young man, named Vinter, who was engaged, undertook to protest against his sweeping condemnation, and declared that Ralph, who was a universal favorite among the ladies, ought to be the last to revile them.

"If," he went on, "the Baroness should propose to six well-known ladies here in this city whom I could mention, I would wager six Johannisbergers, and an equal amount of champagne, that every one of them would accept him."

The others loudly applauded this proposal, and Ralph accepted the wager. The letters were written on the spot, and immediately despatched. Toward morning, the merry carousal broke up, and Ralph was conducted in triumph to his home.

III

Two days later, Ralph again knocked on Bertha's door. He looked paler than usual, almost haggard; his immaculate linen was a little crumpled, and he carried no cane; his lips were tightly compressed, and his face wore an air of desperate resolution.

"It is done," he said, as he seated himself opposite her. "I am going."

"Going!" cried she, startled at his unusual appearance. "How, where?"

"To America. I sail to-night. I have followed your advice, you see. I have cut off the last bridge behind me."

"But, Ralph," she exclaimed, in a voice of alarm. "Something dreadful must have happened. Tell me quick; I must know it."

"No; nothing dreadful," muttered he, smiling bitterly. "I have made a little scandal, that is all. My father told me to-day to go to the devil, if I chose, and my mother gave me five hundred dollars to help me along on the way. If you wish to know, here is the explanation."

And he pulled from his pocket six perfumed and carefully folded notes, and threw them into her lap.

"Do you wish me to read them?" she asked, with growing surprise.

"Certainly. Why not?"

She hastily opened one note after the other, and read.

"But, Ralph," she cried, springing up from her seat, while her eyes flamed with indignation, "what does this mean? What have you done?"

"I didn't think it needed any explanation," replied he, with feigned indifference. "I proposed to them all, and, you see, they all accepted me. I received all these letters to-day. I only wished to know whether the whole world regarded me as such a worthless scamp as you told me I was."

She did not answer, but sat mutely staring at him,

fiercely crumpling a rose-colored note in her hand. He began to feel uncomfortable under her gaze, and threw himself about uneasily in his chair.

"Well," said he, at length, rising, "I suppose there is nothing more. Good-by."

"One moment, Mr. Grim," demanded she, sternly. "Since I have already said so much, and you have obligingly revealed to me a new side of your character, I claim the right to correct the opinion I expressed of you at our last meeting."

"I am all attention."

"I did think, Mr. Grim," began she, breathing hard, and steadying herself against the table at which she stood, "that you were a very selfish man—an embodiment of selfishness, absolute and supreme, but I did not believe that you were wicked."

"And what convinced you that I was selfish, if I may ask?"

"What convinced me?" repeated she, in a tone of inexpressible contempt. "When did you ever act from any generous regard for others? What good did you ever do to anybody?"

"You might ask, with equal justice, what good I ever did to myself."

"In a certain sense, yes; because to gratify a mere momentary wish is hardly doing one's self good."

"Then I have, at all events, followed the Biblical precept, and treated my neighbor very much as I treat myself."

"I did think," continued Bertha, without heeding the remark, "that you were at bottom kind-hearted,

but too hopelessly well-bred ever to commit an act of any decided complexion, either good or bad. Now I see that I have misjudged you, and that you are capable of outraging the most sacred feelings of a woman's heart in mere wantonness, or for the sake of satisfying a base curiosity, which never could have entered the mind of an upright and generous man."

The hard, benumbed look in Ralph's face thawed in the warmth of her presence, and her words, though stern, touched a secret spring in his heart. He made two or three vain attempts to speak, then suddenly broke down, and cried:

"Bertha, Bertha, even if you scorn me, have patience with me, and listen."

And he told her, in rapid, broken sentences, how his love for her had grown from day to day, until he could no longer master it; and how, in an unguarded moment, when his pride rose in fierce conflict against his love, he had done this reckless deed of which he was now heartily ashamed. The fervor of his words touched her, for she felt that they were sincere. Large mute tears trembled in her eyelashes as she sat gazing tenderly at him, and in the depth of her soul the wish awoke that she might have been able to return this great and strong love of his; for she felt that in this love lay the germ of a new, of a stronger and better man. She noticed, with a half-regretful pleasure, his handsome figure, his delicately shaped hands, and the noble cast of his features; an overwhelming pity for him rose within her, and she began to reproach herself for having spoken so

harshly, and, as she now thought, so unjustly. Perhaps he read in her eyes the unspoken wish. He seized her hand, and his words fell with a warm and alluring cadence upon her ear.

"I shall not see you for a long time to come, Bertha," said he, "but if at the end of five or six years your hand is still free, and I return another man —a man to whom you could safely intrust your happiness—would you then listen to what I may have to say to you? For I promise, by all that we both hold sacred—"

"No, no," interrupted she, hastily. "Promise nothing. It would be unjust to yourself, and perhaps also to me; for a sacred promise is a terrible thing, Ralph. Let us both remain free; and, if you return and still love me, then come, and I shall receive you and listen to you. And even if you have outgrown your love, which is, indeed, more probable, come still to visit me wherever I may be, and we shall meet as friends and rejoice in the meeting."

"You know best," he murmured. "Let it be as you have said."

He arose, took her face between his hands, gazed long and tenderly into her eyes, pressed a kiss upon her forehead, and hastened away.

That night Ralph boarded the steamer for Hull, and three weeks later landed in New York.

IV

The first three months of Ralph's sojourn in America were spent in vain attempts to obtain a situ-

ation. Day after day he walked down Broadway, calling at various places of business, and night after night he returned to his cheerless room with a faint heart and declining spirits. It was, after all, a more serious thing than he had imagined, to cut the cable which binds one to the land of one's birth. There a hundred subtile influences, the existence of which no one suspects until the moment they are withdrawn, unite to keep one in the straight path of rectitude, or at least of external respectability; and Ralph's life had been all in society; the opinion of his fellow-men had been the one force to which he implicitly deferred, and the conscience by which he had been wont to test his actions had been nothing but the aggregate judgment of his friends. To such a man the isolation and the utter irresponsibility of a life among strangers was tenfold more dangerous; and Ralph found, to his horror, that his character contained innumerable latent possibilities which the easy-going life in his home probably never would have revealed to him. It often cut him to the quick, when, on entering an office in his daily search for employment, he was met by hostile or suspicious glances, or when, as it occasionally happened, the door was slammed in his face, as if he were a vagabond or an impostor. Then the wolf was often roused within him, and he felt a momentary wild desire to become what the people here evidently believed him to be. Many a night he sauntered irresolutely about the gambling places in obscure streets, and the glare of light, the rude shouts and clamors in the same moment repelled and attracted him. If he went to the devil,

who would care? His father had himself pointed out the way to him; and nobody could blame him if he followed the advice. But then again a memory emerged from that chamber of his soul which still he held sacred; and Bertha's deep-blue eyes gazed upon him with their earnest look of tender warning and regret.

When the summer was half gone, Ralph had gained many a hard victory over himself, and learned many a useful lesson; and at length he swallowed his pride, divested himself of his fine clothes, and accepted a position as assistant gardener at a villa on the Hudson. And as he stood perspiring with a spade in his hand, and a cheap broad-brimmed straw hat on his head, he often took a grim pleasure in picturing to himself how his aristocratic friends at home would receive him if he should introduce himself to them in this new costume.

"After all, it was only my position they cared for," he reflected, bitterly; "without my father's name what would I be to them?"

Then, again, there was a certain satisfaction in knowing that, for his present situation, humble as it was, he was indebted to nobody but himself; and the thought that Bertha's eyes, if they could have seen him now, would have dwelt upon him with pleasure and approbation, went far to console him for his aching back, his sunburned face, and his swollen and blistered hands.

One day, as Ralph was raking the gravel-walks in the garden, his employer's daughter, a young lady of seventeen, came out and spoke to him. His culture

and refinement of manner struck her with wonder, and she asked him to tell her his history; but then he suddenly grew very grave, and she forbore pressing him. From that time she attached a kind of romantic interest to him, and finally induced her father to obtain him a situation that would be more to his taste. And, before winter came, Ralph saw the dawn of a new future glimmering before him. He had wrestled bravely with fate, and had once more gained a victory. He began the career in which success and distinction awaited him as proofreader on a newspaper in the city. He had fortunately been familiar with the English language before he left home, and by the strength of his will he conquered all difficulties. At the end of two years he became attached to the editorial staff; new ambitious hopes, hitherto foreign to his mind, awoke within him; and with joyous tumult of heart he saw life opening its wide vistas before him, and he labored on manfully to repair the losses of the past, and to prepare himself for greater usefulness in times to come. He felt in himself a stronger and fuller manhood, as if the great arteries of the vast universal world-life pulsed in his own being. The drowsy, indolent existence at home appeared like a dull remote dream from which he had awaked, and he blessed the destiny which, by its very sternness, had mercifully saved him; he blessed her, too, who, from the very want of love for him, had, perhaps, made him worthier of love.

The years flew rapidly. Society had flung its doors open to him, and what was more, he had found some

warm friends, in whose houses he could come and go at pleasure. He enjoyed keenly the privilege of daily association with high-minded and refined women; their eager activity of intellect stimulated him, their exquisite ethereal grace and their delicately chiseled beauty satisfied his æsthetic cravings, and the responsive vivacity of their nature prepared him ever new surprises. He felt a strange fascination in the presence of these women, and the conviction grew upon him that their type of womanhood was superior to any he had hitherto known. And by way of refuting his own argument, he would draw from his pocketbook the photograph of Bertha, which had a secret compartment there all to itself, and, gazing tenderly at it, would eagerly defend her against the disparaging reflections which the involuntary comparison had provoked. And still, how could he help seeing that her features, though well molded, lacked animation; that her eye, with its deep, trustful glance, was not brilliant, and that the calm earnestness of her face, when compared with the bright, intellectual beauty of his present friends, appeared pale and simple, like a violet in a bouquet of vividly colored roses? It gave him a quick pang, when, at times, he was forced to admit this; nevertheless, it was the truth.

After six years of residence in America, Ralph had gained a very high reputation as a journalist of rare culture and ability, and in 1867 he was sent to the World's Exhibition in Paris, as correspondent of the paper on which he had during all these years been employed. What wonder, then, that he started for Eu-

rope a few weeks before his presence was needed in the imperial city, and that he steered his course directly toward the fjord valley where Bertha had her home? It was she who had bidden him Godspeed when he fled from the land of his birth, and she, too, should receive his first greeting on his return.

V

The sun had fortified itself behind a citadel of flaming clouds, and the upper forest region shone with a strange ethereal glow, while the lower plains were wrapped in shadow; but the shadow itself had a strong suffusion of color. The mountain peaks rose cold and blue in the distance.

Ralph, having inquired his way of the boatman who had landed him at the pier, walked rapidly along the beach, with a small valise in his hand, and a light summer overcoat flung over his shoulder. Many half-thoughts grazed his mind, and ere the first had taken shape, the second and the third came and chased it away. And still they all in some fashion had reference to Bertha; for in a misty, abstract way, she filled his whole mind; but for some indefinable reason, he was afraid to give free rein to the sentiment which lurked in the remoter corners of his soul.

Onward he hastened, while his heart throbbed with the quickening tempo of mingled expectation and fear. Now and then one of those chill gusts of air, which seem to be careering about aimlessly in the atmosphere during early summer, would strike into his face, and recall him to a keener self-consciousness.

Ralph concluded, from his increasing agitation, that he must be very near Bertha's home. He stopped and looked around him. He saw a large maple at the roadside, some thirty steps from where he was standing, and the girl who was sitting under it, resting her head in her hand and gazing out over the sea, he recognized in an instant to be Bertha. He sprang up on the road, not crossing, however, her line of vision, and approached her noiselessly from behind.

"Bertha," he whispered.

She gave a little joyous cry, sprang up, and made a gesture as if to throw herself in his arms; then suddenly checked herself, blushed crimson, and moved a step backward.

"You came so suddenly," she murmured.

"But, Bertha," cried he (and the full bass of his voice rang through her very soul), "have I gone into exile and waited these many years for so cold a welcome?"

"You have changed so much, Ralph," she answered, with that old grave smile which he knew so well, and stretched out both her hands toward him. "And I have thought of you so much since you went away, and blamed myself because I had judged you so harshly, and wondered that you could listen to me so patiently, and never bear me any malice for what I said."

"If you had said a word less," declared Ralph, seating himself at her side on the greensward, "or if you had varnished it over with politeness, then you would probably have failed to produce any effect and I should

not have been burdened with that heavy debt of gratitude which I now owe you. I was a pretty thick-skinned animal in those days, Bertha. You said the right word at the right moment; you gave me a bold and a good piece of advice, which my own ingenuity would never have suggested to me. I will not thank you, because, in so grave a case as this, spoken thanks sound like a mere mockery. Whatever I am, Bertha, and whatever I may hope to be, I owe it all to that hour."

She listened with rapture to the manly assurance of his voice; her eyes dwelt with unspeakable joy upon his strong, bronzed features, his full thick blond beard, and the vigorous proportions of his frame. Many and many a time during his absence had she wondered how he would look if he ever came back, and with that minute conscientiousness which, as it were, pervaded her whole character, she had held herself responsible before God for his fate, prayed for him, and trembled lest evil powers should gain the ascendency over his soul.

On their way to the house they talked together of many things, but in a guarded, cautious fashion, and without the cheerful abandonment of former years. They both, as it were, groped their way carefully in each other's minds, and each vaguely felt that there was something in the other's thought which it was not well to touch unbidden. Bertha saw that all her fears for him had been groundless, and his very appearance lifted the whole weight of responsibility from her breast; and still, did she rejoice at her deliverance from her burden? Ah, no; in this moment she knew that

that which she had foolishly cherished as the best and noblest part of herself had been but a selfish need of her own heart. She feared that she had only taken that interest in him which one feels in a thing of one's own making, and now, when she saw that he had risen quite above her; that he was free and strong, and could have no more need of her, she had, instead of generous pleasure at his success, but a painful sense of emptiness, as if something very dear had been taken from her.

Ralph, too, was loth to analyze the impression his old love made upon him. His feelings were of so complex a nature, he was anxious to keep his more magnanimous impulses active, and he strove hard to convince himself that she was still the same to him as she had been before they had ever parted. But, alas! though the heart be warm and generous, the eye is a merciless critic. And the man who had moved on the wide arena of the world, whose mind had housed the large thoughts of this century, and expanded with its invigorating breath—was he to blame because he had unconsciously outgrown his old provincial self, and could no more judge by its standards?

Bertha's father was a peasant, but he had, by his lumber trade, acquired what in Norway was called a very handsome fortune. He received his guest with dignified reserve, and Ralph thought he detected in his eyes a lurking look of distrust. "I know your errand," that look seemed to say, "but you had better give it up at once. It will be of no use for you to try."

And after supper, as Ralph and Bertha sat talking confidingly with each other at the window, he sent his daughter a quick, sharp glance, and then, without ceremony, commanded her to go to bed. Ralph's heart gave a great thump within him; not because he feared the old man, but because his words, as well as his glances, revealed to him the sad history of these long, patient years. He doubted no longer that the love which he had once so ardently desired was his at last; and he made a silent vow that, come what might, he would remain faithful.

As he came down to breakfast the next morning, he found Bertha sitting at the window, engaged in hemming what appeared to be a rough kitchen towel. She bent eagerly over her work, and only a vivid flush upon her cheek told him that she had noticed his coming. He took a chair, seated himself opposite her, and bade her "good-morning." She raised her head, and showed him a sweet, troubled countenance, which the early sunlight illumined with a high spiritual beauty. It reminded him forcibly of those pale, sweet-faced saints of Fra Angelico, with whom the frail flesh seems ever on the point of yielding to the ardent aspirations of the spirit. And still even in this moment he could not prevent his eyes from observing that one side of her forefinger was rough from sewing, and that the whiteness of her arm, which the loose sleeves displayed, contrasted strongly with the browned and sunburned complexion of her hands.

After breakfast they again walked together on the beach, and Ralph, having once formed his resolution,

now talked freely of the New World—of his sphere of activity there; of his friends and of his plans for the future; and she listened to him with a mild, perplexed look in her eyes, as if trying vainly to follow the flight of his thoughts. And he wondered, with secret dismay, whether she was still the same strong, brave-hearted girl whom he had once accounted almost bold; whether the life in this narrow valley, amid a hundred petty and depressing cares, had not cramped her spiritual growth, and narrowed the sphere of her thought. Or was she still the same, and was it only he who had changed? At last he gave utterance to his wonder, and she answered him in those grave, earnest tones which seemed in themselves to be half a refutation of his doubts.

"It was easy for me to give you daring advice then, Ralph," she said. "Like most school-girls, I thought that life was a great and glorious thing, and that happiness was a fruit which hung within reach of every hand. Now I have lived for six years trying single-handed to relieve the want and suffering of the needy people with whom I come in contact, and their squalor and wretchedness have sickened me, and, what is still worse, I feel that all I can do is as a drop in the ocean, and, after all, amounts to nothing. I know I am no longer the same reckless girl who, with the very best intention, sent you wandering through the wide world; and I thank God that it proved to be for your good, although the whole now appears quite incredible to me. My thoughts have moved so long within the narrow circle of these mountains that they have lost their

youthful elasticity, and can no more rise above them."

Ralph detected, in the midst of her despondency, a spark of her former fire, and grew eloquent in his endeavors to persuade her that she was unjust to herself, and that there was but a wider sphere of life needed to develop all the latent powers of her rich nature.

At the dinner-table, her father again sat eying his guest with that same cold look of distrust and suspicion. And when the meal was at an end, he rose abruptly and called his daughter into another room. Presently Ralph heard his angry voice resounding through the house, interrupted now and then by a woman's sobs, and a subdued, passionate pleading. When Bertha again entered the room, her eyes were very red, and he saw that she had been weeping. She threw a shawl over her shoulders, beckoned to him with her hand, and he arose and followed her. She led the way silently until they reached a thick copse of birch and alder near the strand. She dropped down upon a bench between two trees, and he took his seat at her side.

"Ralph," began she, with a visible effort, "I hardly know what to say to you; but there is something which I must tell you—my father wishes you to leave us at once."

"And *you*, Bertha?"

"Well—yes—I wish it too."

She saw the painful shock which her words gave him, and she strove hard to speak. Her lips trembled,

her eyes became suffused with tears, which grew and grew, but never fell; she could not utter a word.

"Well, Bertha," answered he, with a little quiver in his voice, "if you, too, wish me to go, I shall not tarry. Good-by."

He rose quickly, and, with averted face, held out his hand to her; but as she made no motion to grasp the hand, he began distractedly to button his coat, and moved slowly away.

"Ralph."

He turned sharply, and, before he knew it, she lay sobbing upon his breast.

"Ralph," she murmured, while the tears almost choked her words, "I could not have you leave me thus. It is hard enough—it is hard enough—"

"What is hard, beloved?"

She raised her head abruptly, and turned upon him a gaze full of hope and doubt, and sweet perplexity.

"Ah, no, you do not love me," she whispered, sadly.

"Why should I come to seek you, after these many years, dearest, if I did not wish to make you my wife before God and men? Why should I—"

"Ah, yes, I know," she interrupted him with a fresh fit of weeping, "you are too good and honest to wish to throw me away, now when you have seen how my soul has hungered for the sight of you these many years, how even now I cling to you with a despairing clutch. But you can not disguise yourself, Ralph, and I saw from the first moment that you loved me no more."

"Do not be such an unreasonable child," he remon-

strated, feebly. "I do not love you with the wild, irrational passion of former years; but I have the tenderest regard for you, and my heart warms at the sight of your sweet face, and I shall do all in my power to make you as happy as any man can make you who—"

"Who does not love me," she finished.

A sudden shudder seemed to shake her whole frame, and she drew herself more tightly up to him.

"Ah, no," she continued, after a while, sinking back upon her seat. "It is a hopeless thing to compel a reluctant heart. I will accept no sacrifice from you. You owe me nothing, for you have acted toward me honestly and uprightly, and I shall be a stronger or —at least—a better woman for what you gave me—and—for what you could not give me, even though you would."

"But, Bertha," exclaimed he, looking mournfully at her, "it is not true when you say that I owe you nothing. Six years ago, when first I wooed you, you could not return my love, and you sent me out into the world, and even refused to accept any pledge or promise for the future."

"And you returned," she responded, "a man, such as my hope had pictured you; but, while I had almost been standing still, you had outgrown me, and outgrown your old self, and, with your old self, outgrown its love for me, for your love was not of your new self, but of the old. Alas! it is a sad tale, but it is true."

She spoke gravely now, and with a steadier voice, but her eyes hung upon his face with an eager look

of expectation, as if yearning to detect there some gleam of hope, some contradiction of the dismal truth. He read that look aright and it pierced him like a sharp sword. He made a brave effort to respond to its appeal, but his features seemed hard as stone, and he could only cry out against his destiny, and bewail his misfortune and hers.

Toward evening, Ralph was sitting in an open boat, listening to the measured oar-strokes of the boatmen who were rowing him out to the nearest stopping-place of the steamer. The mountains lifted their great placid heads up among the sun-bathed clouds, and the fjord opened its cool depths as if to make room for their vast reflections. Ralph felt as if he were floating in the midst of the blue infinite space, and, with the strength which this feeling inspired, he tried to face boldly the thought from which he had but a moment ago shrunk as from something hopelessly sad and perplexing.

And in that hour he looked fearlessly into the gulf which separates the New World from the Old. He had hoped to bridge it; but, alas! it can not be bridged.

THE IDYL OF RED GULCH

BY BRET HARTE

Francis Bret Harte (born at Albany, N.Y., August 25, 1839; died in 1902) wrought a revolution in the art of story-writing by his California tale, "The Luck of Roaring Camp," which appeared in 1868 in the second number of "The Overland Monthly," of which Harte was editor. This was followed by a number of stories of the same original quality, such as "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" and "The Idyl of Red Gulch," concerning which Parke Godwin wrote in "Putnam's Magazine," 1870: "Bret Harte has deepened and broadened our literary and moral sympathies; he has broken the sway of the artificial and conventional; he has substituted actualities for idealities—but actualities that manifest the grandeur of self-sacrifice, the beauty of love, the power of childhood, and the ascendency of nature."

THE IDYL OF RED GULCH

BY BRET HARTE

SANDY was very drunk. He was lying under an azalea-bush, in pretty much the same attitude in which he had fallen some hours before. How long he had been lying there he could not tell, and didn't care; how long he should lie there was a matter equally indefinite and unconsidered. A tranquil philosophy, born of his physical condition, suffused and saturated his moral being.

The spectacle of a drunken man, and of this drunken man in particular, was not, I grieve to say, of sufficient novelty in Red Gulch to attract attention. Earlier in the day some local satirist had erected a temporary tombstone at Sandy's head, bearing the inscription, "Effects of McCorkle's whiskey—kills at forty rods," with a hand pointing to McCorkle's saloon. But this, I imagine, was, like most local satire, personal; and was a reflection upon the unfairness of the process rather than a commentary upon the impropriety of the result. With this facetious exception, Sandy had been undisturbed. A wandering mule, released from his pack, had cropped the scant herbage beside him, and sniffed curiously at the prostrate man; a vagabond dog, with that deep sympathy which the species have for drunken men, had licked his dusty boots and curled

Copyright, 1899, by Bret Harte. Published by special arrangement with Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., publishers of Mr. Harte's works.

himself up at his feet, and lay there, blinking one eye in the sunlight, with a simulation of dissipation that was ingenious and dog-like in its implied flattery of the unconscious man beside him.

Meanwhile the shadows of the pine-trees had slowly swung around until they crossed the road, and their trunks barred the open meadow with gigantic parallels of black and yellow. Little puffs of red dust, lifted by the plunging hoofs of passing teams, dispersed in a grimy shower upon the recumbent man. The sun sank lower and lower, and still Sandy stirred not. And then the repose of this philosopher was disturbed, as other philosophers have been, by the intrusion of an unphilosophical sex.

"Miss Mary," as she was known to the little flock that she had just dismissed from the log schoolhouse beyond the pines, was taking her afternoon walk. Observing an unusually fine cluster of blossoms on the azalea-bush opposite, she crossed the road to pluck it, picking her way through the red dust, not without certain fierce little shivers of disgust and some feline circumlocution. And then she came suddenly upon Sandy!

Of course she uttered the little staccato cry of her sex. But when she had paid that tribute to her physical weakness she became overbold and halted for a moment—at least six feet from this prostrate monster —with her white skirts gathered in her hand, ready for flight. But neither sound nor motion came from the bush. With one little foot she then overturned the satirical headboard, and muttered "Beasts!"—an epi-

thet which probably, at that moment, conveniently classified in her mind the entire male population of Red Gulch. For Miss Mary, being possessed of certain rigid notions of her own, had not, perhaps, properly appreciated the demonstrative gallantry for which the Californian has been so justly celebrated by his brother Californians, and had, as a new-comer, perhaps fairly earned the reputation of being "stuck up."

As she stood there she noticed, also, that the slant sunbeams were heating Sandy's head to what she judged to be an unhealthy temperature, and that his hat was lying uselessly at his side. To pick it up and to place it over his face was a work requiring some courage, particularly as his eyes were open. Yet she did it and made good her retreat. But she was somewhat concerned, on looking back, to see that the hat was removed, and that Sandy was sitting up and saying something.

The truth was, that in the calm depths of Sandy's mind he was satisfied that the rays of the sun were beneficial and healthful; that from childhood he had objected to lying down in a hat; that no people but condemned fools, past redemption, ever wore hats; and that his right to dispense with them when he pleased was inalienable. This was the statement of his inner consciousness. Unfortunately, its outward expression was vague, being limited to a repetition of the following formula: "Su'shine all ri'! Wasser maär, eh? Wass up, su'shine?"

Miss Mary stopped, and, taking fresh courage from

her vantage of distance, asked him if there was anything that he wanted.

"Wass up? Wasser maär?" continued Sandy, in a very high key.

"Get up, you horrid man!" said Miss Mary, now thoroughly incensed; "get up and go home."

Sandy staggered to his feet. He was six feet high, and Miss Mary trembled. He started forward a few paces and then stopped.

"Wass I go home for?" he suddenly asked, with great gravity.

"Go and take a bath," replied Miss Mary, eying his grimy person with great disfavor.

To her infinite dismay, Sandy suddenly pulled off his coat and vest, threw them on the ground, kicked off his boots, and, plunging wildly forward, darted headlong over the hill in the direction of the river.

"Goodness heavens! the man will be drowned!" said Miss Mary; and then, with feminine inconsistency, she ran back to the schoolhouse and locked herself in.

That night, while seated at supper with her hostess, the blacksmith's wife, it came to Miss Mary to ask, demurely, if her husband ever got drunk. "Abner," responded Mrs. Stidger reflectively—"let's see! Abner hasn't been tight since last 'lection." Miss Mary would have liked to ask if he preferred lying in the sun on these occasions, and if a cold bath would have hurt him; but this would have involved an explanation, which she did not then care to give. So she contented herself with opening her gray eyes widely at the red-cheeked Mrs. Stidger—a fine speci-

men of Southwestern efflorescence—and then dismissed the subject altogether. The next day she wrote to her dearest friend in Boston: "I think I find the intoxicated portion of this community the least objectionable. I refer, my dear, to the men, of course. I do not know anything that could make the women tolerable."

In less than a week Miss Mary had forgotten this episode, except that her afternoon walks took thereafter, almost unconsciously, another direction. She noticed, however, that every morning a fresh cluster of azalea blossoms appeared among the flowers on her desk. This was not strange, as her little flock were aware of her fondness for flowers, and invariably kept her desk bright with anemones, syringas, and lupines; but, on questioning them, they one and all professed ignorance of the azaleas. A few days later, Master Johnny Stidger, whose desk was nearest to the window, was suddenly taken with spasms of apparently gratuitous laughter, that threatened the discipline of the school. All that Miss Mary could get from him was, that some one had been "looking in the winder." Irate and indignant, she sallied from her hive to do battle with the intruder. As she turned the corner of the schoolhouse she came plump upon the quondam drunkard, now perfectly sober, and inexpressibly sheepish and guilty-looking.

These facts Miss Mary was not slow to take a feminine advantage of, in her present humor. But it was somewhat confusing to observe, also, that the beast, despite some faint signs of past dissipation, was amia-

ble-looking—in fact, a kind of blond Samson, whose corn-colored silken beard apparently had never yet known the touch of barber's razor or Delilah's shears. So that the cutting speech which quivered on her ready tongue died upon her lips, and she contented herself with receiving his stammering apology with supercilious eyelids and the gathered skirts of uncontamination. When she re-entered the schoolroom, her eyes fell upon the azaleas with a new sense of revelation; and then she laughed, and the little people all laughed, and they were all unconsciously very happy.

It was a hot day, and not long after this, that two short-legged boys came to grief on the threshold of the school with a pail of water, which they had laboriously brought from the spring, and that Miss Mary compassionately seized the pail and started for the spring herself. At the foot of the hill a shadow crossed her path, and a blue-shirted arm dexterously but gently relieved her of her burden. Miss Mary was both embarrassed and angry. "If you carried more of that for yourself," she said spitefully to the blue arm, without deigning to raise her lashes to its owner, "you'd do better." In the submissive silence that followed she regretted the speech, and thanked him so sweetly at the door that he stumbled. Which caused the children to laugh again—a laugh in which Miss Mary joined, until the color came faintly into her pale cheek. The next day a barrel was mysteriously placed beside the door, and as mysteriously filled with fresh spring-water every morning.

Nor was this superior young person without other

quiet attentions. "Profane Bill," driver of the Slumgullion Stage, widely known in the newspapers for his "gallantry" in invariably offering the box-seat to the fair sex, had excepted Miss Mary from this attention, on the ground that he had a habit of "cussin' on up grades," and gave her half the coach to herself. Jack Hamlin, a gambler, having once silently ridden with her in the same coach, afterward threw a decanter at the head of a confederate for mentioning her name in a barroom. The over-dressed mother of a pupil whose paternity was doubtful had often lingered near this astute Vestal's temple, never daring to enter its sacred precincts, but content to worship the priestess from afar.

With such unconscious intervals the monotonous procession of blue skies, glittering sunshine, brief twilights, and starlit nights passed over Red Gulch. Miss Mary grew fond of walking in the sedate and proper woods. Perhaps she believed, with Mrs. Stidger, that the balsamic odors of the firs "did her chest good," for certainly her slight cough was less frequent and her step was firmer; perhaps she had learned the unending lesson which the patient pines are never weary of repeating to heedful or listless ears. And so one day she planned a picnic on Buckeye Hill, and took the children with her. Away from the dusty road, the straggling shanties, the yellow ditches, the clamor of restless engines, the cheap finery of shop-windows, the deeper glitter of paint and colored glass, and the thin veneering which barbarism takes upon itself in such localities, what infinite relief was theirs! The

last heap of ragged rock and clay passed, the last unsightly chasm crossed—how the waiting woods opened their long files to receive them! How the children—perhaps because they had not yet grown quite away from the breast of the bounteous Mother—threw themselves face downward on her brown bosom with uncouth caresses, filling the air with their laughter; and how Miss Mary herself—felinely fastidious and intrenched as she was in the purity of spotless skirts, collar, and cuffs—forgot all, and ran like a crested quail at the head of her brood, until, romping, laughing, and panting, with a loosened braid of brown hair, a hat hanging by a knotted ribbon from her throat, she came suddenly and violently, in the heart of the forest, upon the luckless Sandy!

The explanations, apologies, and not overwise conversation that ensued need not be indicated here. It would seem, however, that Miss Mary had already established some acquaintance with this ex-drunkard. Enough that he was soon accepted as one of the party; that the children, with that quick intelligence which Providence gives the helpless, recognized a friend, and played with his blond beard and long silken mustache, and took other liberties—as the helpless are apt to do. And when he had built a fire against a tree, and had shown them other mysteries of woodcraft, their admiration knew no bounds. At the close of two such foolish, idle, happy hours he found himself lying at the feet of the schoolmistress, gazing dreamily in her face as she sat upon the sloping hillside weaving wreaths of laurel and syringa, in very much the

same attitude as he had lain when first they met. Nor was the similitude greatly forced. The weakness of an easy, sensuous nature, that had found a dreamy exaltation in liquor, it is to be feared was now finding an equal intoxication in love.

I think that Sandy was dimly conscious of this himself. I know that he longed to be doing something—slaying a grizzly, scalping a savage, or sacrificing himself in some way for the sake of this sallow-faced, gray-eyed schoolmistress. As I should like to present him in an heroic attitude, I stay my hand with great difficulty at this moment, being only withheld from introducing such an episode by a strong conviction that it does not usually occur at such times. And I trust that my fairest reader, who remembers that, in a real crisis, it is always some uninteresting stranger or unromantic policeman, and not Adolphus, who rescues, will forgive the omission.

So they sat there undisturbed—the woodpeckers chattering overhead and the voices of the children coming pleasantly from the hollow below. What they said matters little. What they thought—which might have been interesting—did not transpire. The woodpeckers only learned how Miss Mary was an orphan; how she left her uncle's house to come to California for the sake of health and independence; how Sandy was an orphan too; how he came to California for excitement; how he had lived a wild life, and how he was trying to reform; and other details, which, from a woodpecker's viewpoint, undoubtedly must have seemed stupid and a waste of time. But even in such

trifles was the afternoon spent; and when the children were again gathered, and Sandy, with a delicacy which the schoolmistress well understood, took leave of them quietly at the outskirts of the settlement, it had seemed the shortest day of her weary life.

As the long, dry summer withered to its roots, the school term of Red Gulch—to use a local euphuism—"dried up" also. In another day Miss Mary would be free, and for a season, at least, Red Gulch would know her no more. She was seated alone in the schoolhouse, her cheek resting on her hand, her eyes half closed in one of those day-dreams in which Miss Mary, I fear, to the danger of school discipline, was lately in the habit of indulging. Her lap was full of mosses, ferns, and other woodland memories. She was so preoccupied with these and her own thoughts that a gentle tapping at the door passed unheard, or translated itself into the remembrance of far-off woodpeckers. When at last it asserted itself more distinctly, she started up with a flushed cheek and opened the door. On the threshold stood a woman, the self-assertion and audacity of whose dress were in singular contrast to her timid, irresolute bearing.

Miss Mary recognized at a glance the dubious mother of her anonymous pupil. Perhaps she was disappointed, perhaps she was only fastidious; but as she coldly invited her to enter, she half unconsciously settled her white cuffs and collar, and gathered closer her own chaste skirts. It was, perhaps, for this reason that the embarrassed stranger, after a moment's hesitation, left her gorgeous parasol open and stick-

ing in the dust beside the door, and then sat down at the further end of a long bench. Her voice was husky as she began:

"I heerd tell that you were goin' down to the Bay to-morrow, and I couldn't let you go until I came to thank you for your kindness to my Tommy."

Tommy, Miss Mary said, was a good boy, and deserved more than the poor attention she could give him.

"Thank you, miss; thank ye!" cried the stranger, brightening even through the color which Red Gulch knew facetiously as her "war paint," and striving, in her embarrassment, to drag the long bench nearer the schoolmistress. "I thank you, miss, for that; and if I am his mother, there ain't a sweeter, dearer, better boy lives than him. And if I ain't much as says it, thar ain't a sweeter, dearer, angeler teacher lives than he's got."

Miss Mary, sitting primly behind her desk, with a ruler over her shoulder, opened her gray eyes widely at this, but said nothing.

"It ain't for you to be complimented by the like of me, I know," she went on hurriedly. "It ain't for me to be comin' here, in broad day, to do it, either; but I come to ask a favor—not for me, miss—not for me, but for the darling boy."

Encouraged by a look in the young schoolmistress's eye, and putting her lilac-gloved hands together, the fingers downward, between her knees, she went on, in a low voice:

"You see, miss, there's no one the boy has any claim

on but me, and I ain't the proper person to bring him up. I thought some, last year, of sending him away to Frisco to school, but when they talked of bringing a schoolma'am here, I waited till I saw you, and then I knew it was all right, and I could keep my boy a little longer. And, oh! miss, he loves you so much; and if you could hear him talk about you in his pretty way, and if he could ask you what I ask you now, you couldn't refuse him.

"It is natural," she went on rapidly, in a voice that trembled strangely between pride and humility—"it's natural that he should take to you, miss, for his father, when I first knew him, was a gentleman—and the boy must forget me, sooner or later—and so I ain't a-goin' to cry about that. For I come to ask you to take my Tommy—God bless him for the bestest, sweetest boy that lives—to—to—take him with you."

She had risen and caught the young girl's hand in her own, and had fallen on her knees beside her.

"I've money plenty, and it's all yours and his. Put him in some good school, where you can go and see him, and help him to—to—to forget his mother. Do with him what you like. The worst you can do will be kindness to what he will learn with me. Only take him out of this wicked life, this cruel place, this home of shame and sorrow. You will! I know you will—won't you? You will—you must not, you can not say no! You will make him as pure, as gentle as yourself; and when he has grown up, you will tell him his father's name—the name that hasn't passed

my lips for years—the name of Alexander Morton, whom they call here Sandy! Miss Mary!—do not take your hand away! Miss Mary, speak to me! You will take my boy? Do not put your face from me. I know it ought not to look on such as me. Miss Mary!—my God, be merciful!—she is leaving me!"

Miss Mary had risen, and in the gathering twilight had felt her way to the open window. She stood there, leaning against the casement, her eyes fixed on the last rosy tints that were fading from the western sky. There was still some of its light on her pure young forehead, on her white collar, on her clasped white hands, but all fading slowly away. The suppliant had dragged herself, still on her knees, beside her.

"I know it takes time to consider. I will wait here all night; but I can not go until you speak. Do not deny me now. You will!—I see it in your sweet face —such a face as I have seen in my dreams. I see it in your eyes, Miss Mary!—you will take my boy!"

The last red beam crept higher, suffused Miss Mary's eyes with something of its glory, flickered, and faded, and went out. The sun had set on Red Gulch. In the twilight and silence Miss Mary's voice sounded pleasantly.

"I will take the boy. Send him to me to-night."

The happy mother raised the hem of Miss Mary's skirts to her lips. She would have buried her hot face in its virgin folds, but she dared not. She rose to her feet.

"Does—this man—know of your intention?" asked Miss Mary suddenly.

"No, nor cares. He has never seen the child to know it."

"Go to him at once—to-night—now! Tell him what you have done. Tell him I have taken his child, and tell him—he must never see—see—the child again. Wherever it may be, he must not come; wherever I may take it, he must not follow! There, go now, please—I'm weary, and—have much yet to do!"

They walked together to the door. On the threshold the woman turned.

"Good-night!"

She would have fallen at Miss Mary's feet. But at the same moment the young girl reached out her arms, caught the sinful woman to her own pure breast for one brief moment, and then closed and locked the door.

It was with a sudden sense of great responsibility that Profane Bill took the reins of the Slumgullion stage the next morning, for the schoolmistress was one of his passengers. As he entered the highroad, in obedience to a pleasant voice from the "inside," he suddenly reined up his horses and respectfully waited, as Tommy hopped out at the command of Miss Mary.

"Not that bush, Tommy—the next."

Tommy whipped out his new pocket-knife, and cutting a branch from a tall azalea-bush, returned with it to Miss Mary.

"All right now?"

"All right!"

And the stage-door closed on the Idyl of Red Gulch.

CRUTCH, THE PAGE

BY GEORGE ALFRED TOWNSEND

George Alfred Townsend (born at Georgetown, Del., January 30, 1841) has written over his signature of "Gath" more newspaper correspondence than any other living writer. In addition he has found time to write a number of books, one of which, "Tales of the Chesapeake," published in 1880, ranks among the notable collections of American short stories. It contains tales in the manner of Hawthorne, Poe, and Bret Harte, which critics have complimented as being equal to the work of these masters. Of the present selection, a story in which a famous Washington character, "Beau Hickman," is introduced, E. C. Stedman said: "It is good enough for Bret Harte or anybody."

CRUTCH, THE PAGE

BY GEORGE ALFRED TOWNSEND ("GATH")

I—CHIPS

THE Honorable Jeems Bee, of Texas, sitting in his committee-room half an hour before the convening of Congress, waiting for his negro familiar to compound a julep, was suddenly confronted by a small boy on crutches.

"A letter!" exclaimed Mr. Bee, "with the frank of Reybold on it—that Yankeest of Pennsylvania Whigs! Yer's familiarity! Wants me to appoint one U—U—U, what?"

"Uriel Basil," said the small boy on crutches, with a clear, bold, but rather sensitive voice.

"Uriel Basil, a page in the House of Representatives, bein' an infirm, deservin' boy, willin' to work to support his mother. Infirm boy wants to be a page, on the recommendation of a Whig, to a Dimmycratic committee. I say, gen'lemen, what do you think of that, heigh?"

This last addressed to some other members of the committee, who had meantime entered.

"Infum boy will make a spry page," said the Hon. Box Izard, of Arkansaw.

"Harder to get infum page than the Speaker's eye," said the orator, Pontotoc Bibb, of Georgia.

From "Tales of the Chesapeake." Copyright, 1880, by George Alfred Townsend

"Harder to get both than a 'pintment in these crowded times on a opposition recommendation when all ole Virginny is yaw to be tuk care of," said Hon. Fitzchew Smy, of the Old Dominion.

The small boy standing up on crutches, with large hazel eyes swimming and wistful, so far from being cut down by these criticisms, stood straighter, and only his narrow little chest showed feeling, as it breathed quickly under his brown jacket.

"I can run as fast as anybody," he said impetuously. "My sister says so. You try me!"

"Who's yo' sister, bub?"

"Joyce."

"Who's Joyce?"

"Joyce Basil—*Miss* Joyce Basil to you, gentlemen. My mother keeps boarders. Mr. Reybold boards there. I think it's hard when a little boy from the South wants to work, that the only body to help him find it is a Northern man. Don't you?"

"Good hit!" cried Jeroboam Coffee, Esq., of Alabama. "That boy would run, if he could!"

"Gentlemen," said another member of the committee, the youthful abstractionist from South Carolina, who was reputed to be a great poet on the stump, the Hon. Lowndes Cleburn—"gentlemen, that boy puts the thing on its igeel merits and brings it home to us. I'll ju my juty in this issue. Abe, wha's my julep?"

"Gentlemen," said the Chairman of the Committee, Jeems Bee, "it 'pears to me that there's a social p'int right here. Reybold, bein' the only Whig on the Lake and Bayou Committee, ought to have something

if he sees fit to ask for it. That's courtesy! We, of all men, gentlemen, can't afford to forget it."

"No, by durn!" cried Fitzchew Smy.

"You're right, Bee!" cried Box Izard. "You give it a constitutional set."

"Reybold," continued Jeems Bee, thus encouraged, "Reybold is (to speak out) no genius! He never will rise to the summits of usefulness. He lacks the air, the swing, the *pose,* as the sculptors say; he won't treat, but he'll lend a little money, provided he knows where you goin' with it. If he ain't open-hearted, he ain't precisely mean!"

"You're right, Bee!" (General expression.)

"Further on, it may be said that the framers of the gov'ment never intended *all* the patronage to go to one side. Mr. Jeff'son put *that* on the steelyard principle: the long beam here, the big weight of being in the minority there. Mr. Jackson only threw it considabul more on one side, but even he, gentlemen, didn't take the whole patronage from the Outs; he always left 'em enough to keep up the courtesy of the thing, and we can't go behind *him.* Not and be true to our traditions. Do I put it right?"

"Bee," said the youthful Lowndes Cleburn, extending his hand, "you put it with the lucidity and spirituality of Kulhoon himself!"

"Thanks, Cleburn," said Bee; "this is a compliment not likely to be forgotten, coming from you. Then it is agreed, as the Chayman of yo' Committee, that I accede to the request of Mr. Reybold, of Pennsylvania?"

"Aye!" from everybody.

"And now," said Mr. Bee, "as we wair all up late at the club last night, I propose we take a second julep, and as Reybold is coming in he will jine us."

"I won't give you a farthing!" cried Reybold at the door, speaking to some one. "Chips, indeed! What shall I give you money to gamble away for? A gambling beggar is worse than an impostor! No, sir! Emphatically no!"

"A dollar for four chips for brave old Beau!" said the other voice. "I've struck 'em all but you. By the State Arms! I've got rights in this distreek! Everybody pays toll to brave old Beau! Come down!"

The Northern Congressman retreated before this pertinacious mendicant into his committee-room, and his pesterer followed him closely, nothing abashed, even into the privileged cloisters of the committee. The Southern members enjoyed the situation.

"Chips, Right Honorable! Chips for old Beau. Nobody this ten-year has run as long as you. I've laid for you, and now I've fell on you. Judge Bee, the fust business befo' yo' committee this mornin' is a assessment for old Beau, who's 'way down! Rheumatiz, bettin' on the black, failure of remittances from Fauqueeah, and other casualties by wind an' flood, have put ole Beau away down. He's a institution of his country and must be sustained!"

The laughter was general and cordial among the Southerners, while the intruder pressed hard upon Mr. Reybold. He was a singular object; tall, grim,

half-comical, with a leer of low familiarity in his eyes, but his waxed mustache of military proportions, his patch of goatee just above the chin, his elaborately oiled hair and flaming necktie, set off his faded face with an odd gear of finery and impressiveness. His skin was that of an old *roué's,* patched up and chalked, but the features were those of a once handsome man of style and carriage.

He wore what appeared to be a cast-off spring overcoat, out of season and color on this blustering winter day, a rich buff waistcoat of an embossed pattern, such as few persons would care to assume, save, perhaps, a gambler, negro buyer, or fine "buck" barber. The assumption of a large and flashy pin stood in his frilled shirt-bosom. He wore watch-seals without the accompanying watch, and his pantaloons, though faded and threadbare, were once of fine material and cut in a style of extravagant elegance, and they covered his long, shrunken, but aristocratic limbs, and were strapped beneath his boots to keep them shapely. The boots themselves had been once of varnished kid or fine calf, but they were cracked and cut, partly by use, partly for comfort; for it was plain that their wearer had the gout, by his aristocratic hobble upon a gold-mounted cane, which was not the least inconsistent garniture of mendicancy.

"Boys," said Fitzchew Smy, "I s'pose we better come down early. There's a shillin', Beau. If I had one more such constituent as you, I should resign or die premachorely!"

"There's a piece o' tobacker," said Jeems Bee lan-

guidly, "all I can afford, Beau, this mornin'. I went to a chicken-fight yesterday and lost all my change."

"Mine," said Box Izard, "is a regulation pen-knife, contributed by the United States, with the regret, Beau, that I can't 'commodate you with a pine coffin for you to git into and git away down lower than you ever been."

"Yaw's a dollar," said Pontotoc Bibb; "it'll do for me an' Lowndes Cleburn, who's a poet and genius, and never has no money. This buys me off, Beau, for a month."

The gorgeous old mendicant took them all grimly and leering, and then pounced upon the Northern man, assured by their twinkles and winks that the rest expected some sport.

"And now, Right Honorable from the banks of the Susquehanna, Colonel Reybold—you see, I got your name; I ben a layin' for you!—come down handsome for the Uncle and ornament of this capital and country. What's yore's?"

"Nothing," said Reybold in a quiet way. "I can not give a man like you anything, even to get rid of him."

"You're mean," said the stylish beggar, winking to the rest. "You hate to put your hand down in yer pocket, mightily. I'd rather be ole Beau, and live on suppers at the faro banks, than love a dollar like you!"

"I'll make it a V for Beau," said Pontotoc Bibb, "if he gives him a rub on the raw like that another lick. Durn a mean man, Cleburn!"

"Come down, Northerner," pressed the incorrigible loafer again; "it don't become a Right Honorable to be so mean with old Beau."

The little boy on crutches, who had been looking at this scene in a state of suspense and interest for some time, here cried hotly:

"If you say Mr. Reybold is a mean man, you tell a story, you nasty beggar! He often gives things to me and Joyce, my sister. He's just got me work, which is the best thing to give; don't you think so, gentlemen?"

"Work," said Lowndes Cleburn, "is the best thing to give away, and the most onhandy thing to keep. I like play the best—Beau's kind o' play!"

"Yes," said Jeroboam Coffee; "I think I prefer to make the chips fly out of a table more than out of a log."

"I like to work!" cried the little boy, his hazel eyes shining, and his poor, narrow body beating with unconscious fervor, half suspended on his crutches, as if he were of that good descent and natural spirit which could assert itself without bashfulness in the presence of older people. "I like to work for my mother. If I was strong, like other little boys, I would make money for her, so that she shouldn't keep any boarders—except Mr. Reybold. Oh! she has to work a lot; but she's proud and won't tell anybody. All the money I get I mean to give her; but I wouldn't have it if I had to beg for it like that man!"

"O Beau," said Colonel Jeems Bee, "you've cotched it now! Reybold's even with you. Little Crutch

has cooked your goose! Crutch is right eloquent when his wind will permit."

The fine old loafer looked at the boy, whom he had not previously noticed, and it was observed that the last shaft had hurt his pride. The boy returned his wounded look with a straight, undaunted, spirited glance, out of a child's nature. Mr. Reybold was impressed with something in the attitude of the two, which made him forget his own interest in the controversy.

Beau answered with a tone of nearly tender pacification:

"Now, my little man; come, don't be hard on the old veteran! He's down, old Beau is, sence the time he owned his blooded pacer and dined with the *Corps Diplomatique;* Beau's down sence then; but don't call the old feller hard names. We take it back, don't we? —we take *them* words back?"

"There's a angel somewhere," said Lowndes Cleburn, "even in a Washington bummer, which responds to a little chap on crutches with a clear voice. Whether the angel takes the side of the bummer or the little chap, is a p'int out of our jurisdiction. Abe, give Beau a julep. He seems to have been demoralized by little Crutch's last."

"Take them hard words back, Bub," whined the licensed mendicant, with either real or affected pain; "it's a p'int of honor I'm a-standin' on. Do, now, little Major!"

"I shan't!" cried the boy. "Go and work like me. You're big, and you called Mr. Reybold mean.

Haven't you got a wife or little girl, or nobody to work for? You ought to work for yourself, anyhow. Oughtn't he, gentlemen?"

Reybold, who had slipped around by the little cripple and was holding him in a caressing way from behind, looked over to Beau and was even more impressed with that generally undaunted worthy's expression. It was that of acute and suffering sensibility, perhaps the effervescence of some little remaining pride, or it might have been a twinge of the gout. Beau looked at the little boy, suspended there with the weak back and the narrow chest, and that scintillant, sincere spirit beaming out with courage born in the stock he belonged to. Admiration, conciliation, and pain were in the ruined vagrant's eyes. Reybold felt a sense of pity. He put his hand in his pocket and drew forth a dollar.

"Here, Beau," he said, "I'll make an exception. You seem to have some feeling. Don't mind the boy!"

In an instant the coin was flying from his hand through the air. The beggar, with a livid face and clinched cane, confronted the Congressman like a maniac.

"You bilk!" he cried. "You supper customer! I'll brain you! I had rather parted with my shoes at a dolly shop and gone gadding the hoof, without a doss to sleep on—a town pauper, done on the vag—than to have been made scurvy in the sight of that child and deserve his words of shame!"

He threw his head upon the table and burst into tears.

II—HASH

Mrs. Tryphonia Basil kept a boarding-house of the usual kind on Four-and-a-Half Street. Male clerks—there were no female clerks in the Government in 1854—to the number of half a dozen, two old bureau officers, an architect's assistant, Reybold, and certain temporary visitors made up the table. The landlady was the mistress; the slave was Joyce.

Joyce Basil was a fine-looking girl, who did not know it—a fact so astounding as to be fitly related only in fiction. She did not know it, because she had to work so hard for the boarders and her mother. Loving her mother with the whole of her affection, she had suffered all the pains and penalties of love from that repository. She was to-day upbraided for her want of coquetry and neatness; to-morrow, for proposing to desert her mother and elope with a person she had never thought of. The mainstay of the establishment, she was not aware of her usefulness. Accepting every complaint and outbreak as if she deserved it, the poor girl lived at the capital a beautiful scullion, an unsalaried domestic, and daily forwarded the food to the table, led in the chamber work, rose from bed unrested and retired with all her bones aching. But she was of a natural grace that hard work could not make awkward; work only gave her bodily power, brawn, and form. Though no more than seventeen years of age, she was a superb woman, her chest thrown forward, her back like the torso of a *Venus de Milo,* her head placed on the throat of a

Minerva, and the nature of a child molded in the form of a matron. Joyce Basil had black hair and eyes—very long, excessive hair, that in the mornings she tied up with haste so imperfectly that once Reybold had seen it drop like a cloud around her and nearly touch her feet. At that moment, seeing him, she blushed. He pleaded, for once, a Congressman's impudence, and without her objection wound that great crown of woman's glory around her head, and, as he did so, the perfection of her form and skin, and the overrunning health and height of the Virginia girl, struck him so thoroughly that he said:

"Miss Joyce, I don't wonder that Virginia is the mother of Presidents."

Between Reybold and Joyce there were already the delicate relations of a girl who did not know that she was a woman and a man who knew she was beautiful and worthy. He was a man vigilant over himself, and the poverty and menial estate of Joyce Basil were already insuperable obstacles to marrying her, but still he was attracted by her insensibility that he could ever have regarded her in the light of marriage. "Who was her father, the Judge?" he used to reflect. The Judge was a favorite topic with Mrs. Basil at the table.

"Mr. Reybold," she would say, "you commercial people of the Nawth can't hunt, I believe. Jedge Basil is now on the mountains of Fawquear hunting the plova. His grandfather's estate is full of plova."

If, by chance, Reybold saw a look of care on Mrs.

Basil's face, he inquired for the Judge, her husband, and found he was still shooting on the Occequan.

"Does he never come to Washington, Mrs. Basil?" asked Reybold one day, when his mind was very full of Joyce, the daughter.

"Not while Congress is in session," said Mrs. Basil. "It's a little too much of the *oi polloi* for the Judge. His family, you may not know, Mr. Reybold, air of the Basils of King George. They married into the Tayloze of Mount Snaffle. The Tayloze of Mount Snaffle have Ingin blood in their veins—the blood of Pokyhuntus. They dropped the name of Taylor, which had got to be common through a want of Ingin blood, and spelled it with a E. It used to be Taylor, but now it's Tayloze."

On another occasion, at sight of Joyce Basil cooking over the fire, against whose flame her molded arms took momentary roses upon their ivory, Reybold said to himself: "Surely there is something above the common in the race of this girl." And he asked the question of Mrs. Basil:

"Madame, how was the Judge, your husband, at the last advices?"

"Hunting the snipe, Mr. Reybold. I suppose you do not have the snipe in the Nawth. It is the aristocratic fowl of the Old Dominion. Its bill is only shorter than its legs, and it will not brown at the fire, to perfection, unless upon a silver spit. Ah! when the Jedge and myself were young, before his land troubles overtook us, we went to the springs with our own silver and carriages, Mr. Reybold."

Looking up at Mrs. Basil, Reybold noticed a pallor and flush alternately, and she evaded his eye.

Once Mrs. Basil borrowed a hundred dollars from Reybold in advance of board, and the table suffered in consequence.

"The Judge," she had explained, "is short of taxes on his Fawquear lands. It's a desperate moment with him." Yet in two days the Judge was shooting blue-winged teal at the mouth of the Accotink, and his entire indifference to his family set Reybold to thinking whether the Virginia husband and father was anything more than a forgetful savage. The boarders, however, made very merry over the absent unknown. If the beefsteak was tough, threats were made to send for "the Judge," and let him try a tooth on it; if scant, it was suggested that the Judge might have paid a gunning visit to the premises and inspected the larder. The daughter of the house kept such an even temper, and was so obliging within the limitations of the establishment, that many a boarder went to his department without complaint, though with an appetite only partly satisfied. The boy, Uriel, also was the guardsman of the household, old-faced as if with the responsibility of taking care of two women. Indeed, the children of the landlady were so well behaved and prepossessing that, compared with Mrs. Basil's shabby *hauteur* and garrulity, the legend of the Judge seemed to require no other foundation than offspring of such good spirit and intonation.

Mrs. Tryphonia Basil was no respecter of persons. She kept boarders, she said, as a matter of society,

and to lighten the load of the Judge. He had very little idea that she was making a mercantile matter of hospitality, but, as she feelingly remarked, "the old families are misplaced in such times as these yer, when the departments are filled with Dutch, Yankees, Crackers, Pore Whites, and other foreigners." Her manner was, at periods, insolent to Mr. Reybold, who seldom protested, out of regard to the daughter and the little Page; he was a man of quite ordinary appearance, saying little, never making speeches or soliciting notice, and he accepted his fare and quarters with little or no complaint.

"Crutch," he said one day to the little boy, "did you ever see your father?"

"No, I never saw him, Mr. Reybold, but I've had letters from him."

"Don't he ever come to see you when you are sick?"

"No. He wanted to come once when my back was very sick, and I laid in bed weeks and weeks, sir, dreaming, oh! such beautiful things. I thought mamma and sister and I were all with papa in that old home we are going to some day. He carried me up and down in his arms, and I felt such rest that I never knew anything like it, when I woke up, and my back began to ache again. I wouldn't let mamma send for him, though, because she said he was working for us all to make our fortunes, and get doctors for me, and clothes and school for dear Joyce. So I sent him my love, and told papa to work, and he and I would bring the family out all right."

"What did your papa seem like in that dream, my little boy?"

"Oh! sir, his forehead was bright as the sun. Sometimes I see him now when I am tired at night after running all day through Congress."

Reybold's eyes were full of tears as he listened to the boy, and, turning aside, he saw Joyce Basil weeping also.

"My dear girl," he said to her, looking up significantly, "I fear he will see his great Father very soon."

Reybold had few acquaintances, and he encouraged the landlady's daughter to go about with him when she could get a leisure hour or evening. Sometimes they took a seat at the theatre, more often at the old Ascension Church, and once they attended a President's reception. Joyce had the bearing of a well-bred lady, and the purity of thought of a child. She was noticed as if she had been a new and distinguished arrival in Washington.

"Ah! Reybold," said Pontotoc Bibb, "I understand, ole feller, what keeps you so quiet now. You've got a wife unbeknown to the Kemittee! and a happy man I know you air."

It pleased Reybold to hear this, and deepened his interest in the landlady's family. His attention to her daughter stirred Mrs. Basil's pride and revolt together.

"My daughter, Colonel Reybold," she said, "is designed for the army. The Judge never writes to me but he says: 'Tryphonee, be careful that you impress upon my daughter the importance of the military pro-

fession. My mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother married into the army, and no girl of the Basil stock shall descend to civil life while I can keep the Fawquear estates.'"

"Madame," said the Congressman, "will you permit me to make the suggestion that your daughter is already a woman and needs a father's care, if she is ever to receive it. I beseech you to impress this subject upon the Judge. His estates can not be more precious to his heart, if he is a man of honor; nay, what is better than honor, his duty requires him to come to the side of these children, though he be ever so constrained by business or pleasure to attend to more worldly concerns."

"The Judge," exclaimed Mrs. Basil, much miffed, "is a man of hereditary ijees, Colonel Reybold. He is now in pursuit of the—ahem!—the Kinvas-back on his ancestral waters. If he should hear that you suggest a pacific life and the groveling associations of the capital for him, he might call you out, sir!"

Reybold said no more; but one evening when Mrs. Basil was absent, called across the Potomac, as happened frequently, at the summons of the Judge—and on such occasions she generally requested a temporary loan or a slight advance of board—Reybold found Joyce Basil in the little parlor of the dwelling. She was alone and in tears, but the little boy Uriel slept before the chimney-fire on a rug, and his pale, thin face, catching the glow of the burning wood, looked beautified as Reybold addressed the young woman.

"Miss Joyce," he said, "our little brother works

too hard. Is there never to be relief for him? His poor, withered body, slung on those crutches for hours and hours, racing up the aisles of the House with stronger pages, is wearing him out. His ambition is very interesting to see, but his breath is growing shorter and his strength is frailer every week. Do you know what it will lead to?"

"O my Lord!" she said, in the negrofied phrase natural to her latitude, "I wish it was no sin to wish him dead."

"Tell me, my friend," said Reybold, "can I do nothing to assist you both? Let me understand you. Accept my sympathy and confidence. Where is Uriel's father? What is this mystery?"

She did not answer.

"It is for no idle curiosity that I ask," he continued. "I will appeal to him for his family, even at the risk of his resentment. Where is he?"

"Oh, do not ask!" she exclaimed. "You want me to tell you only the truth. He is *there!*"

She pointed to one of the old portraits in the room —a picture fairly painted by some provincial artist— and it revealed a handsome face, a little voluptuous, but aristocratic, the shoulders clad in a martial cloak, the neck in ruffles, and a diamond in the shirt bosom. Reybold studied it with all his mind.

"Then it is no fiction," he said, "that you have a living father, one answering to your mother's description. Where have I seen that face? Has some irreparable mistake, some miserable controversy, alienated him from his wife? Has he another family?"

She answered with spirit:

"No, sir. He is my father and my brother's only. But I can tell you no more."

"Joyce," he said, taking her hand, "this is not enough. I will not press you to betray any secret you may possess. Keep it. But of yourself I must know something more. You are almost a woman. You are beautiful."

At this he tightened his grasp, and it brought him closer to her side. She made a little struggle to draw away, but it pleased him to see that when the first modest opposition had been tried she sat quite happily, though trembling, with his arm around her.

"Joyce," he continued, "you have a double duty: one to your mother and this poor invalid, whose journey toward that Father's house not made with hands is swiftly hastening; another duty toward your nobler self—the future that is in you and your woman's heart. I tell you again that you are beautiful, and the slavery to which you are condemning yourself forever is an offence against the creator of such perfection. Do you know what it is to love?"

"I know what it is to feel kindness," she answered after a time of silence. "I ought to know no more. Your goodness is very dear to me. We never sleep, brother and I, but we say your name together, and ask God to bless you."

Reybold sought in vain to suppress a confession he had resisted. The contact of her form, her large dark eyes now fixed upon him in emotion, the birth of the conscious woman in the virgin and her affection still in

the leashes of a slavish sacrifice, tempted him onward to the conquest.

"I am about to retire from Congress," he said. "It is no place for me in times so insubstantial. There is darkness and beggary ahead for all your Southern race. There is a crisis coming which will be followed by desolation. The generation to which your parents belong is doomed! I open my arms to you, dear girl, and offer you a home never yet gladdened by a wife. Accept it, and leave Washington with me and with your brother. I love you wholly."

A happy light shone in her face a moment. She was weary to the bone with the day's work and had not the strength, if she had the will, to prevent the Congressman drawing her to his heart. Sobbing there, she spoke with bitter agony:

"Heaven bless you, dear Mr. Reybold, with a wife good enough to deserve you! Blessings on your generous heart. But I can not leave Washington. I love another here!"

III—DUST

The Lake and Bayou Committee reaped the reward of a good action. Crutch, the page, as they all called Uriel Basil, affected the sensibility of the whole committee to the extent that profanity almost ceased there, and vulgarity became a crime in the presence of a child. Gentle words and wishes became the rule; a glimmer of reverence and a thought of piety were not unknown in that little chamber.

"Dog my skin!" said Jeems Bee, "if I ever made

a 'pintment that give me sech satisfaction! I feel as if I had sot a nigger free!"

The youthful abstractionist, Lowndes Cleburn, expressed it even better. "Crutch," he said, "is like a angel reduced to his bones. Them air wings or pinions, that he might have flew off with, being a pair of crutches, keeps him here to tarry awhile in our service. But, gentlemen, he's not got long to stay. His crutches is growing too heavy for that expandin' sperit. Some day we'll look up and miss him through our tears."

They gave him many a present; they put a silver watch in his pocket, and dressed him in a jacket with gilt buttons. He had a bouquet of flowers to take home every day to that marvelous sister of whom he spoke so often; and there were times when the whole committee, seeing him drop off to sleep as he often did through frail and weary nature, sat silently watching lest he might be wakened before his rest was over. But no persuasion could take him off the floor of Congress. In that solemn old Hall of Representatives, under the semicircle of gray columns, he darted with agility from noon to dusk, keeping speed upon his crutches with the healthiest of the pages, and racing into the document-room, and through the dark and narrow corridors of the old Capitol loft, where the House library was lost in twilight. Visitors looked with interest and sympathy at the narrow back and body of this invalid child, whose eyes were full of bright, beaming spirit. He sometimes nodded on the steps by the Speaker's chair; and these spells of dream-

iness and fatigue increased as his disease advanced upon his wasting system. Once he did not awaken at all until adjournment. The great Congress and audience passed out, and the little fellow still slept, with his head against the Clerk's desk, while all the other pages were grouped around him, and they finally bore him off to the committee-room in their arms, where, among the sympathetic watchers, was old Beau. When Uriel opened his eyes the old mendicant was looking into them.

"Ah! little Major," he said, "poor Beau has been waiting for you to take those bad words back. Old Beau thought it was all bob with his little cove."

"Beau," said the boy, "I've had such a dream! I thought my dear father, who is working so hard to bring me home to him, had carried me out on the river in a boat. We sailed through the greenest marshes, among white lilies, where the wild ducks were tame as they can be. All the ducks were diving and diving, and they brought up long stalks of celery from the water and gave them to us. Father ate all his. But mine turned into lilies and grew up so high that I felt myself going with them, and the higher I went the more beautiful grew the birds. Oh! let me sleep and see if it will be so again."

The outcast raised his gold-headed cane and hobbled up and down the room with a laced handkerchief at his eyes.

"Great God!" he exclaimed, "another generation is going out, and here I stay without a stake, playing a lone hand forever and forever."

"Beau," said Reybold, "there's hope while one can feel. Don't go away until you have a good word from our little passenger."

The outstretched hand of the Northern Congressman was not refused by the vagrant, whose eccentric sorrow yet amused the Southern Committeemen.

"Ole Beau's jib-boom of a mustache 'll put his eye out," said Pontotoc Bibb, "ef he fetches another groan like that."

"Beau's very shaky around the hams an' knees," said Box Izard; "he's been a good figger, but even figgers can lie ef they stand up too long."

The little boy unclosed his eyes and looked around on all those kindly, watching faces.

"Did anybody fire a gun?" he said. "Oh! no. I was only dreaming that I was hunting with father, and he shot at the beautiful pheasants that were making such a whirring of wings for me. It was music. When can I hunt with father, dear gentlemen?"

They all felt the tread of the mighty hunter before the Lord very near at hand—the hunter whose name is Death.

"There are little tiny birds along the beach," muttered the boy. "They twitter and run into the surf and back again, and I am one of them! I must be, for I feel the water cold, and yet I see you all, so kind to me! Don't whistle for me now; for I don't get much play, gentlemen! Will the Speaker turn me out if I play with the beach birds just once? I'm only a little boy working for my mother."

"Dear Uriel," whispered Reybold, "here's Old

Beau, to whom you once spoke angrily. Don't you see him?"

The little boy's eyes came back from far-land somewhere, and he saw the ruined gamester at his feet.

"Dear Beau," he said, "I can't get off to go home with you. They won't excuse me, and I give all my money to mother. But you go to the back gate. Ask for Joyce. She'll give you a nice warm meal every day. Go with him, Mr. Reybold! If you ask for him it will be all right; for Joyce—dear Joyce!—she loves you."

The beach birds played again along the strand; the boy ran into the foam with his companions and felt the spray once more. The Mighty Hunter shot his bird—a little cripple that twittered the sweetest of them all. Nothing moved in the solemn chamber of the committee but the voice of an old forsaken man, sobbing bitterly.

IV—CAKE

The funeral was over, and Mr. Reybold marveled much that the Judge had not put in an appearance. The whole committee had attended the obsequies of Crutch and acted as pall-bearers. Reybold had escorted the page's sister to the Congressional cemetery, and had observed even old Beau to come with a wreath of flowers and hobble to the grave and deposit them there. But the Judge, remorseless in death as frivolous in life, never came near his mourning wife and daughter in their severest sorrow. Mrs. Trypho-

nia Basil, seeing that this singular want of behavior on the Judge's part was making some ado, raised her voice above the general din of meals.

"Jedge Basil," she exclaimed, "has been on his Tennessee purchase. These Christmas times there's no getting through the snow in the Cumberland Gap. He's stopped off thaw to shoot the—ahem!—the wild torkey—a great passion with the Jedge. His half-uncle, Gineral Johnson, of Awkinso, was a torkey-killer of high celebrity. He was a Deshay on his Maw's side. I s'pose you haven't the torkey in the Dutch country, Mr. Reybold?"

"Madame," said Reybold, in a quieter moment, "have you written to the Judge the fact of his son's death?"

"Oh, yes—to Fawquear."

"Mrs. Basil," continued the Congressman, "I want you to be explicit with me. Where is the Judge, your husband, at this moment?"

"Excuse me, Colonel Reybold, this is a little of a assumption, sir. The Jedge might call you out, sir, for intruding upon his incog. He's very fine on his incog., you air awair."

"Madame," exclaimed Reybold straightforwardly, "there are reasons why I should communicate with your husband. My term in Congress is nearly expired. I might arouse your interest, if I chose, by recalling to your mind the memorandum of about seven hundred dollars in which you are my debtor. That would be a reason for seeing your husband anywhere north of the Potomac, but I do not intend to mention

it. Is he aware—are you?—that Joyce Basil is in love with some one in this city?"

Mrs. Basil drew a long breath, raised both hands, and ejaculated: "Well, I declaw!"

"I have it from her own lips," continued Reybold. "She told me as a secret, but all my suspicions are awakened. If I can prevent it, madame, that girl shall not follow the example of hundreds of her class in Washington, and descend, through the boarding-house or the lodging quarter, to be the wife of some common and unambitious clerk, whose penury she must some day sustain by her labor. I love her myself, but I will never take her until I know her heart to be free. Who is this lover of your daughter?"

An expression of agitation and cunning passed over Mrs. Basil's face.

"Colonel Reybold," she whined, "I pity your blasted hopes. If I was a widow, they should be comfoted. Alas! my daughter is in love with one of the Fitzchews of Fawqueeah. His parents is cousins of the Jedge, and attached to the military."

The Congressman looked disappointed, but not yet satisfied.

"Give me at once the address of your husband," he spoke. "If you do not, I shall ask your daughter for it, and she can not refuse me."

The mistress of the boarding-house was not without alarm, but she dispelled it with an outbreak of anger.

"If my daughter disobeys her mother," she cried, "and betrays the Jedge's incog., she is no Basil, Colo-

nel Reybold. The Basils repudiate her, and she may jine the Dutch and other foreigners at her pleasure."

"That is her only safety," exclaimed Reybold. "I hope to break every string that holds her to yonder barren honor and exhausted soil."

He pointed toward Virginia, and hastened away to the Capitol. All the way up the squalid and muddy avenue of that day he mused and wondered: "Who is Fitzhugh? Is there such a person any more than a Judge Basil? And yet there *is* a Judge, for Joyce has told me so. *She*, at least, can not lie to me. At last," he thought, "the dream of my happiness is over. Invincible in her prejudice as all these Virginians, Joyce Basil has made her bed among the starveling First Families, and there she means to live and die. Five years hence she will have her brood around her. In ten years she will keep a boarding-house and borrow money. As her daughters grow up to the stature and grace of their mother, they will be proud and poor again and breed in and out, until the race will perish from the earth."

Slow to love, deeply interested, baffled but unsatisfied, Reybold made up his mind to cut his perplexity short by leaving the city for the county of Fauquier. As he passed down the avenue late that afternoon, he turned into E Street, near the theatre, to engage a carriage for his expedition. It was a street of livery stables, gambling dens, drinking houses, and worse; murders had been committed along its sidewalks. The more pretentious *canaille* of the city harbored there to prey on the hotels close at hand and aspire to the

chance acquaintance of gentlemen. As Reybold stood in an archway of this street, just as the evening shadows deepened above the line of sunset, he saw something pass which made his heart start to his throat and fastened him to the spot. Veiled and walking fast, as if escaping detection or pursuit, the figure of Joyce Basil flitted over the pavement and disappeared in a door about at the middle of this Alsatian quarter of the capital.

"What house is that?" he asked of a constable passing by, pointing to the door she entered.

"Gambling den," answered the officer. "It used to be old Phil Pendleton's."

Reybold knew the reputation of the house: a resort for the scions of the old tidewater families, where hospitality thinly veiled the paramount design of plunder. The connection established the truth of Mrs. Basil's statement. Here, perhaps, already married to the dissipated heir of some unproductive estate, Joyce Basil's lot was cast forever. It might even be that she had been tempted here by some wretch whose villany she knew not of. Reybold's brain took fire at the thought, and he pursued the fugitive into the doorway. A negro steward unfastened a slide and peeped at Reybold knocking in the hall; and, seeing him of respectable appearance, bowed ceremoniously as he let down a chain and opened the door.

"Short cards in the front saloon," he said; "supper and faro back. Chambers on the third floor. Walk up."

Reybold only tarried a moment at the gaming tables,

where the silent, monotonous deal from the tin box, the lazy stroke of the markers, and the transfer of ivory "chips" from card to card of the sweat-cloth, impressed him as the dullest form of vice he had ever found. Treading softly up the stairs, he was attracted by the light of a door partly ajar, and a deep groan, as of a dying person. He peeped through the crack of the door and beheld Joyce Basil leaning over an old man, whose brow she moistened with her handkerchief. "Dear father," he heard her say, and it brought consolation to more than the sick man. Reybold threw open the door and entered into the presence of Mrs. Basil and her daughter. The former arose with surprise and shame, and cried:

"Jedge Basil, the Dutch have hunted you down. He's here—the Yankee creditor."

Joyce Basil held up her hand in imploration, but Reybold did not heed the woman's remark. He felt a weight rising from his heart, and the blindness of many months lifted from his eyes. The dying mortal upon the bed, over whose face the blue billow of death was rolling rapidly, and whose eyes sought in his daughter's the promise of mercy from on high, was the mysterious parent who had never arrived—the Judge from Fauquier. In that old man's long waxed mustache, crimped hair, and threadbare finery the Congressman recognized old Beau, the outcast gamester and mendicant, and the father of Joyce and Uriel Basil.

"Colonel Reybold," faltered that old wreck of manly beauty and of promise long departed, "old Beau's passing in his checks. The chant coves will be

telling to-morrow what they know of his life in the papers, but I've dropped a cold deck on 'em these twenty years. Not one knows old Beau, the Bloke, to be Tom Basil, cadet at West Point in the last generation. I've kept nothing of my own but my children's good names. My little boy never knew me to be his father. I tried to keep the secret from my daughter, but her affection broke down my disguises. Thank God! the old rounder's deal has run out at last. For his wife he'll flash her diles no more, nor be taken on the vag."

"Basil," said Reybold, "what trust do you leave to me in your family?"

Mrs. Basil strove to interpose, but the dying man raised his voice:

"Tryphonee can go home to Fauquier. She was always welcome there—without me. I was disinherited. But here, Colonel! My last drop of blood is in the girl. She loves you."

A rattle arose in the sinner's throat. He made an effort, and transferred his daughter's hand to the Congressman's. Not taking it away, she knelt with her future husband at the bedside and raised her voice:

"Lord, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom, remember him!"

IN EACH OTHER'S SHOES

BY GEORGE PARSONS LATHROP

George Parsons Lathrop (born in Hawaii, August 25, 1851· died in 1898) was literally wedded to American literature, in that he married Rose, the second daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne. She had inspired his youthful poems, and now collaborated with him in several prose works, as well as helped him materially in his master work, a biographical edition of the works of Hawthorne. The fantastic conception of the present story is reminiscent of the imaginative tales of his father-in-law, but there is lacking the glamour of mysticism that Hawthorne would have thrown around it. However, in aiming directly at the moral sense of his readers, instead of approaching this through the æsthetic sense, the obvious treatment of Lathrop gains in human interest more than it loses in literary quality.

IN EACH OTHER'S SHOES

BY GEORGE PARSONS LATHROP

I

JOHN CROMBIE had taken a room at the new apartment building, The Lorne; having advanced so far in his experience of New York as to be aware that if he could once establish himself in a house associated by name with foreign places and titles his chance of securing "position" would be greatly increased. He did not, however, take his meals in the expensive café of that establishment, finding it more economical to go to an outlandish little French restaurant, some distance away, which had been nicknamed among those of his acquaintance who resorted to it "The Fried Cat." This designation, based on a supposed resemblance to the name of the proprietor, Fricat, was also believed to have value as a sarcasm.

It was with no pleasant sensations, therefore, that Crombie, waking on a gray and drizzling morning of November, remembered that he must hie him to "The Fried Cat" for an early breakfast. He was in a hurry that day; he had a great deal to do. His room was very small and dark; he bounced up and dressed himself, in an obscure sort of way, surreptitiously opening the door and reaching vaguely for his shoes, which stood just outside, ready blacked. Nor did it add to his comfort to know that the shoes were very

By permission of the publishers. From "True and Other Stories," copyright, 1884, by Funk & Wagnalls.

defective as to their soles, and would admit the water freely from the accumulated puddles of the sidewalks. In fact, he had been ashamed to expose their bad condition to the porter when he put them out every night, as he was forced to do, since they were his only pair. Drawing them on hastily, in order to conceal his mortification from even his own mind, he sallied forth; and though at the moment of putting them on a dim sense of something unfamiliar crossed his mind, it was not until he reached "The Fried Cat" that he became fully aware that he had carried off some one else's shoes. He turned up the soles, privately, underneath the low-hanging tablecloth, and by a brief examination convinced himself that the gaiters did not belong to him. The test was simple: his feet were unaccountably dry, and there were none of those breaks in the lower surface of their leather covering which he had so often been obliged to contemplate.

He saw at once that the porter of The Lorne had made a mistake, and must have deposited at another apartment his own very insufficient foot-gear; but there was no chance now to remedy the confusion. Crombie had barely time to reach the office where he was employed.

On an ordinary occasion he would perhaps have gone back to The Lorne and effected an honorable exchange. This particular day, however, was by no means an ordinary occasion. Crombie had made up his mind to take a momentous step; and it was therefore essential that he should appear at his desk exactly on time.

He was a clerk in an important engraving company. For several years he had occupied that post, without any opportunity having presented itself for a promotion. At the best, even should he rise, what could he expect? To be cashier, perhaps, or possibly, under exceptional circumstances, a confidential private secretary. This prospect did not satisfy him; he was determined to strike for something higher.

It will naturally be inferred that he was ambitious. I am not in a position to deny this; but all I can be certain of is, that he was in love—which is often about the same thing.

Several times at The Lorne he had met in the hallways or in the elevator a young lady, who was in no small degree beautiful, and charmed him still more by her generous presence, which conveyed the idea of a harmonious and lovely character. She had light hair and blue eyes, but these outward attributes were joined with a serenity and poise of manner that indicated greater stability than is attributed, as a rule, to individuals of her type.

Once he happened to arrive at the main entrance just as this vision of beauty emerged to take her place in a coupé which was waiting by the curbstone. She dropped her card-case upon the sidewalk, and Crombie's heart throbbed with delight as he picked it up, gave it to her, and received her smiling thanks for his little service. Another time, as he was descending in the elevator, a door opposite the shaft, on the second floor, stood open, and he caught a glimpse of the apartment to which it gave access. The room was fin-

ished in soft tints, and was full of upholstery and hangings that lent it a dim golden atmosphere. In the middle of it stood the young girl, clad in the palest blue, above which her hair shone like a golden cloud on some dim evening sky.

Slight occurrences of this sort had affected him. He learned that she was the daughter of Littimer, the rich, widowed banker: her name was Blanche.

II

In these new, stout shoes that did not belong to him Crombie trod with a buoyancy and assurance strongly in contrast with the limp and half-hearted pace to which his old, shabby gaiters had formerly inclined him. He rattled down the stairs of the elevated station with an alacrity almost bumptious; and the sharp, confident step that announced his entrance into the company's office made the other clerks quite ashamed of their own want of spirit.

He worked at his desk until noon; but when the bells of Trinity rang twelve in solemn music over the busy streets, he dropped his pen, walked with a decisive air the length of the room, and, opening a door at the other end, presented himself before Mr. Blatchford, the treasurer, who was also an influential director. "Crombie, eh? Well, what is it?"

"I want to speak with you a moment, sir."

"Anything important? I'm busy."

"Yes, sir; quite important—to me. Possibly it may be to you."

"Fire away, then; but cut it short." Mr. Blatch-

ford's dense, well-combed gray side-whiskers were directed toward the young man in an aggressive way, as if they had been some sort of weapon.

Crombie nonchalantly settled himself in a chair, at ease.

"I am tired of being a clerk," he said. "I'm going to be a director in this company."

"I guess you're going to be an inmate of a lunatic asylum," Mr. Blatchford remarked with astonished cheerfulness.

"That seems as unlikely to me as the other thing does to you," said Crombie.

Hereupon Mr. Blatchford became sarcastically deferential. "And just about when do you propose to become a director?" he asked.

"In the course of a month. The election, I believe, takes place in December."

"Quite right," said his senior, whose urbanity was meant to be crushing. "Meanwhile, you will need leisure to attend to this little matter. Suppose I oblige you by saying that the company has no further need of your services?"

"Suppose you do. What then?"

Mr. Blatchford gave way to his anger. "What then? Why, then you would have to go; that's all. You would be thrown out of employment. You would have to live on your principal, as long as there was any; and afterward you would be obliged to find some other work, or beg, or borrow, or—"

"That's enough," said Crombie, rising with dignity.

"No, it isn't," the treasurer declared, "for you

don't seem to understand even now. I discharge you, Mr. Crombie, on the company's behalf, and you may leave this office at once."

Crombie bowed and went out. "I'm going to be a director, all the same," he told Mr. Blatchford before he closed the door. Then he collected the few articles that belonged to him from his desk, and departed, a free man. He had his future to himself; or else he had no future worth speaking of; he wasn't sure which. Nevertheless, he felt quite happy. Such a result as this had seemed to him, in the prospect, hardly possible; but now that it had arrived he was not discomfited. Unbounded courage seemed to rise from the stout soles of the alien boots, percolating through his whole system. He was surprised at himself. He had intended to use more diplomacy with Mr. Blatchford, and it was no joke to him to lose his place. But instead of feeling despondent, or going at once in search of new employment, he cheerfully went about making calls on several gentlemen who, he thought, might be induced to aid in his ambitious project. His manner was that of a person sure of his powers and enjoying a well-earned leisure. It had its effect. Two or three stockholders of the company joined in agreeing with him that improved methods could be introduced into its management, and that it would be a good thing to have in the board, say, two young, fresh, active men—of whom Crombie, by reason of his experience and training, should be one.

"I own a little stock," said the deposed clerk, who had taken the precaution to obtain a couple of shares

by great effort in saving. "Besides, not having any other engrossing interests at present, I could give my whole attention to the company's affairs."

"Quite so," said the merchant whom he was addressing, comfortably. "We must see if we can get together a majority; no time to be lost, you know."

"No, sir. I shall go right to work; and perhaps you will speak to some of your friends, and give me some names."

"Certainly. Come in again pretty soon; will you?"

Crombie saw that he had a good foundation to build upon already. Blatchford was not popular, even among the other directors; and sundry stockholders, as well as people having business with the company, had conceived a strong dislike of him on account of his overbearing manners. Therefore it would not be hard to enlist sympathy for a movement obnoxious to him. But it was imperative that the self-nominated candidate should acquire more of the stock; and to do this capital must be had. Crombie did not see quite how it was to be got; he had no sufficient influence with the bankers.

The afternoon was nearly spent, and he trudged uptown, thinking of the ways and means. But though the problem was far from solved, he still continued in a state of extraordinary buoyancy. Those shoes, those shoes! He was so much impressed by their comfort and the service they had done him in making a good appearance that he resolved to get a new pair of his own. He stopped and bought them; then kept on toward The Lorne, carrying his purchase under

his arm without embarrassment. The cold drizzle had ceased, and the sunset came out clear and golden, dipping its bright darts into the shallow pools of wet on the pavement, and somehow mingling with his financial dreams a dream of that fair hair that gave a glory to Miss Blanche's face.

On regaining his modest apartment he sent for the boot-boy, and inquired the whereabouts of his missing shoes.

"Couldn't tell you, sir," said the servant. "Pretty near all the men's boots in the house has gone out, you see, and they'll only be coming back just about now. I'll look out for 'em, sir, and nab 'em as soon as they show up."

"All right. Whose are these that I've been wearing?"

The boy took them, turned them over, and examined them with the eye of a connoisseur in every part. "Them? I should say, sir, them was Mr. Littimer's."

Crombie blushed with mortification. Of all the dwellers in The Lorne, this was the very one with whom it was the most embarrassing to have such a complication occur; and yet, strange inconsistency! he had been longing for any accident, no matter how absurd or fantastic, that could bring him some chance of an acquaintance with Blanche.

"Take these boots, dry them right away, and give 'em a shine. Then carry them up to Mr. Littimer's rooms." He gave the boy a quarter: he was becoming reckless.

Now that he had embarked upon a new career, he

perceived the impropriety of a future director in the Engraving Company going to dine at "The Fried Cat," and so resolved to take his dinner in the gorgeous café of The Lorne. While he was waiting for the proper moment to descend thither, he could not get the shoe question out of his mind. Surely, the boot-boy could not have been so idiotic as to have left that ancient, broken-down pair at Littimer's threshold! And yet it was possible. Crombie felt another flush of humility upon his cheeks. Then he wandered off into reverie upon the multifarious errands of all the pairs of boots and shoes that had gone forth from the great apartment house that day. Patter, patter, patter! tramp, tramp!—he imagined he heard them all walking, stamping, shuffling along toward different parts of the city, with many different objects, and sending back significant echoes. Whither had his own ruinous Congress gaiters gone?—to what destination which they would never have reached had he been in them? Had they carried their temporary possessor into any such worriment and trouble as he himself had often traveled through on their worn but faithful soles?

Breaking off from these idle fancies at length, he went down to the café; and there he had the pleasure of dining at a table not far from Blanche Littimer. But, to his surprise, she was alone. Her father did not appear during the meal.

III

The fact was that the awful possibility, mere conjecture of which had frightened Crombie, had occurred. Littimer had received the young man's shoes in place of his own.

They happened to fit him moderately well; so that he, likewise, did not notice the exchange until he had started for his office. He believed in walking the entire distance, no matter what the weather; and to this practice he made rare exceptions. But he had not progressed very far before he became annoyed by an unaccustomed intrusion of dampness that threatened him with a cold. He looked down, carefully surveyed the artificial casing of his extremities, and decided to hail the first unoccupied coupé he should meet. It was some time before he found one; and when finally he took his seat in the luxurious little bank parlor at Broad Street, his feet were quite wet.

His surprise at this occurrence was doubled when, on taking off the shoes and scrutinizing them more closely, he ascertained that they were the work of his usual maker. What had happened to him? Was he dreaming? It seemed to him that he had gone back many years; that he was a poor young man again, entering upon his first struggle for a foothold in the crowded, selfish, unhomelike metropolis. He remembered the day when *he* had worn shoes like these.

He sent out for an assortment of new ones, from which, with unnecessary lavishness, he chose and kept three or four pairs. All the rest of the day, neverthe-

less, those sorry Congress boots of Crombie's, which he had directed his office-boy to place beside the soft-coal fire, for drying, faced him with a sort of haunting look. However much he might be occupied with weightier matters, he could not keep his eyes from straying in that direction; and whenever they rested on that battered "right" and that way-worn "left," turned up in that mute, appealing repose and uselessness at the fender, his thoughts recurred to his early years of trial and poverty. Ah! how greatly he had changed since then! On some accounts he could almost wish that he were poor again. But when he remembered Blanche, he was glad, for her sake, that he was rich.

But if for her sake, why not for others? Perhaps he had been rather selfish, not only about Blanche, but toward her. His conscience began to reproach him. Had he made for her a large life? Since her mother's premature death, had he instilled into her sympathies, tastes, companionships that would make her existence the richer? Had he not kept her too much to himself? On the other hand, he had gratified all her material wants; she could wear what she pleased, she could go where she chose, she had acquaintances of a sort becoming to the daughter of a wealthy man. Yet there was something lacking. What did she know about old, used-up boots and all that pertains to them? What did she know about indigence, real privation, and brave endurance, such as a hundred thousand fellow-creatures all around her were undergoing?

Somehow it dawned upon the old banker that if she knew about all these things and had some share in them, albeit only through sympathy and helping, she might be happier, more truly a woman, than she was now.

As he sat alone, in revery, he actually heaved a deep sigh. A sigh is often as happy a deliverance as a laugh, in this world of sorrows. It was the first that had escaped Littimer in years. Let us say that it was a breathing space, which gave him time for reflection; it marked the turning of a leaf; it was the beginning of a new chapter in his life.

Before he left the bank he locked the door of the private parlor, and was alone for two or three minutes. The office boy was greatly puzzled the next morning, when he found all the new pairs of shoes ranged intact in the adjoining cupboard. The old ones were missing.

Littimer had gone away in them, furtively. He was ashamed of his own impulse.

This time he resolutely remained afoot instead of hiring a carriage. He despatched a messenger to Blanche, saying that sudden business would prevent his returning to dinner, and continued indefinitely on his way—whither? As to that he was by no means certain; he knew only that he must get out of the beaten track, out of the ruts. For an hour or two he must cease to be Littimer, the prosperous moneyed man, and must tread once more the obscure paths through which he had made his way to fortune. He could hardly have explained the prompting which he

obeyed. Could it have had anything to do with the treacherous holes in the bottoms of those old shoes?

As it chanced, he passed by "The Fried Cat"; and, dingy though the place was, he felt an irresistible desire to enter it. Seating himself, he ordered the regular dinner of the day. The light was dim; the tablecloth was dirty; the attendance was irregular and distracted. Littimer took one sip of the sour wine—which had a flavor resembling vinegar and carmine ink in equal parts—and left the further contents of his bottle untasted. The soup, the stew, and the faded roast that were set before him, he could scarcely swallow; but a small cup of coffee at the end of the wellnigh Barmecide repast came in very palatably.

In default of prandial attractions, Littimer tried to occupy himself by looking at the people around him. The omnifarious assembly included pale, prim-whiskered young clerks; shabby, lonely, sallow young women, whose sallowness and shabbiness stamped them with the mark of integrity; other females whose specious splendor was not nearly so reassuring; old men, broken-down men, middle-aged men of every description, except the well-to-do.

"Some of them," Littimer reflected, "are no worse than I am. But are any of them really any better?"

He could not convince himself that they were; yet his sympathies, somehow, went out toward this motley crowd. It appeared to him very foolish that he should sympathize, but he could not help it. "And, after all," was the next thought that came to him, "are we to give pity to people, or withhold it, simply because they are

better or worse than ourselves? No; there is something more in it than that."

Leaving "The Fried Cat" abruptly, he betook himself to an acquaintance who, he knew, was very active in charities—a man who worked practically, and gave time to the work.

"Do you visit any of your distress cases to-night?" he asked.

"Yes, I shall make a few calls," answered the man of charity. "Would you like to go along?"

"Very much."

So the two started out together. The places they went to were of various kinds, and revealed a considerable diversity of misfortune. Sometimes they entered tenement houses of the most wretched character; but in other instances they went to small and cheap but decent lodgings over the shops on West Side avenues, or even penetrated into boarding-houses of such good appearance that the banker was surprised to find his friend's mission carrying him thither. All the cases, however, had been studied, and were vouched for; and several were those of young men and women having employment, but temporarily disabled, and without friends who could help them.

"You do well to help these beginners, at critical times," said the banker, with satisfaction. "I take a special interest in them."

It was almost the same as if he were receiving relief himself. Who knows? Perhaps he was; but to the outward eye it appeared merely that, with his friend's sanction, he was dispensing money and offers of good-

will to the needy. What a strange freak it was, though, in Littimer! He kept on with the work until quite late in the evening, regardless of the risk he ran by continuing out-of-doors when so ill shod.

I think he had some idea in his mind that he was performing an act of penance.

IV

Having waited a reasonable length of time after dinner, Crombie again left his room, resolved to make a call upon Mr. Littimer, on the plea of apologizing for having marched away with his shoes.

He would not run the risk, by sending his card, of being denied as a stranger; so, notwithstanding much hesitation and tremor, he approached the door which he had once seen standing open, and knocked. A voice which he now heard for the second time in his life, but which was so sweet and crept so naturally into the centre of his heart that the thought of it seemed always to have been there, answered: "Come in." And he did come in.

"Is Mr. Lit—is your father at home?" It seemed to bring him a little nearer to her to say "your father."

Blanche had risen from the chair where she was reading, and looked very much surprised. "Oh," she exclaimed, with girlish simplicity, "I thought it was the waiter! N-no; he hasn't come home yet."

"I beg pardon. Then perhaps I'd better call later." Crombie made a feeble movement toward withdrawal.

"Did you want to see him on business? Who shall I tell him?"

"Mr. Crombie, please. It's nothing very important."

"Oh," said Blanche, with a little blush at her own deception, "haven't I seen you in the house before? Are you staying here?"

She remembered distinctly the incident of the card-case, and how very nice she had thought him, both on that occasion and every time she had seen him. But as for him, his heart sank at the vague impersonality with which she seemed to regard him.

"Yes, I'm here, and can easily come in again."

"I expect my father almost any moment," she said. "Would you like to wait?"

What an absurd question, to one in his frame of mind! "Well, really, it is such a very small matter," he began, examining his hat attentively. Then he glanced up at her again, and smiled: "I only wanted to—to make an apology."

"An apology!" echoed Blanche, becoming rather more distant. "Oh, dear! I'm very sorry, I'm sure. I didn't know there'd been any trouble." She began to look anxious, and turned her eyes upon the smouldering fire in the grate. So this was to be the end of her pleasant, cheerful reveries about this nice young man. And the reveries had been more frequent than she had been aware of until now.

"There has been no trouble," he assured her, eagerly. "Just a little mistake that occurred; and, in fact, I was hardly responsible for it."

Blanche's eyes began to twinkle with a new and amusing interpretation. "Ah!" she cried, "are you the gentleman who—" Then she stopped short.

Crombie was placed in an unexpected embarrassment. How could he possibly drag into his conversation with this lovely young creature so commonplace and vulgar a subject as shoe-leather! Ignoring her unfinished question, he asked: "Do you know, Miss Littimer, whether the—a—one of the servants here has brought up anything for your father—that is, a parcel, a—"

"A pair of shoes?" Blanche broke in, her eyes dancing, while her lips parted in a smile.

"Yes, yes; that's what I meant."

"They came up just after dinner," Blanche returned. "Then you *are* the gentleman."

"I'm afraid I am," Crombie owned, and they both laughed.

Blanche quietly, and with no apparent intention, resumed her chair; and this time Crombie took a seat without waiting to be invited again. Thus they fell to talking in the friendliest way.

"I can't imagine what has become of papa," said Blanche. "He sent word, in the most mysterious manner, that he had an engagement; and it is so unusual! Perhaps it's something about the new house he's building—up-town, you know. Dear me! it does make so much trouble, and I don't believe I shall like it half as well as these little, cosey rooms."

The little, cosey rooms were as the abode of giants compared with Crombie's contracted quarters; but he drew comfort from what she said, thinking how such sentiments might make it possible to win even so unattainable an heiress into some modest home of his own.

"You don't know till you try it," he replied. "Just think of having a place all to yourself, belonging to you."

Blanche lifted her eyebrows, and a little sigh escaped her. She was reflecting, perhaps, that a place all to herself would be rather lonely.

"You have never met my father?" she asked.

"No. I have seen him."

"Well, I think you will like him when you know him."

"I don't doubt it!" Crombie exclaimed with fervor, worshiping the very furniture that surrounded Blanche.

"I hope we may become better acquainted."

"Only I think, Mr. Crombie, he will owe *you* an apology now."

"Why?"

"For keeping your shoes out so late."

"*My* shoes!" said the young man, in vehement surprise.

"Why, yes. Didn't you know they came to him? The porter said so."

Crombie grew red with the sense of his disgrace in having his poverty-stricken boots come to the knowledge of the banker. Really, his mortification was so great that the accident seemed to him to put an end to all his hopes of further relations with Blanche and her father.

"Oh, I assure you," he said, rising, "that makes no difference at all! I'm sorry I mentioned the matter. Pray tell Mr. Littimer not to think of it. I—I believe I'd better go now, Miss Littimer."

Blanche rose too, and Crombie was on the point of bowing a good-night, when the door opened, and a weary figure presented itself on the threshold; the figure of a short man with a spare face, and whiskers in which gray mingled with the sandy tint. He had a pinched, half-growling expression, was draped in a light, draggled overcoat, and carried an umbrella, the ribs of which hung loose around the stick.

"There's papa this moment!" cried Blanche.

Crombie perceived that escape was impossible, and, in a few words, the reason of his presence there was made known to the old gentleman.

Littimer examined the visitor swiftly, from head to foot—especially the foot. He advanced to the fire, toasted first one and then the other of the damp gaiters he had on, and at length broke out, in a tone bordering on reproach: "So you are the owner, are you? Then my sympathy has all been wasted! Why, I supposed, from the condition of these machines that I've been lugging around with me half the day that you must be in the greatest distress. And, lo and behold! I find you a young fellow in prime health, spruce and trim, doing well, I should say, and perfectly happy."

"I can't help that, sir," retorted Crombie, nettled, but speaking with respect. "I confess I was very happy until a moment or two ago."

"What do you mean by that?" the other demanded, with half-yielding pugnacity. "Till I came in—is that the idea?"

"Oh, papa!" said Banche, softly.

"Well, honey-bee, what's the matter?" her father asked, trying to be gruff. "Can't I say what I like, here?" But he surrendered at once by adding: "You may be sure I don't want to offend any one. Sit down, Mr. Crombie, and wait just a few moments while I go into the other room and rejuvenate my hoofs, so to speak—for I fear I've made a donkey of myself."

He disappeared into an adjoining room with Blanche, who there informed him artlessly of Crombie's consideration and attentiveness in restoring the errant shoes. When they came back Littimer insisted upon having the young man remain a little longer and drink a glass of port with him. Before taking his departure, however, Crombie, who felt free to speak since Blanche had retired, made a brief statement in satisfaction of conscience.

"You hinted," he said, "that you judged me to be doing well. I don't want to leave you with a false impression. The truth is, I am not doing well. I have no money to speak of, and to-day I lost the position on which I depended."

"You don't tell me!" Littimer's newly roused charitable impulses came to the fore. "Why, now you begin to be really interesting, Mr. Crombie."

"Thanks," said Crombie; "I'm not ambitious to interest people in that way, I told you only because I thought it fair."

"Don't be touchy, my dear sir," answered the banker. "I meant what I said. Come, let's see what can be done. Have you any scheme in view?"

"Yes, I have," said Crombie, with decision.

Littimer gave a grunt. He was afraid of people with schemes, and was disappointed with the young man's want of helplessness. Dependence would have been an easier thing to deal with.

"Well," said he, "we must talk it over. Come and see me at the bank to-morrow. You know the address."

V

The next day Crombie called at the bank; but Littimer was not there. He was not very well, it was said; had not come down-town. Crombie did what he could toward organizing his fight for a directorship, and then returned to The Lorne, where he punctually inquired after Mr. Littimer's health, and learned that the banker's ardor in making the rounds among distressed people the night before had been followed by reaction into a bad cold, with some threat of pneumonia. Blanche was plainly anxious. The attack lasted three or four days, and Crombie, though the affair of the directorship was pressing for attention, could not forbear to remain as near as possible to Blanche, offering every aid within his power, so far as he might without overstepping the lines of his very recent acquaintance. But the Littimers did not, according to his observation, number any very intimate companions in their circle, or at least had not many friends who would be assiduous in such an emergency. Perhaps their friends were too busy with social engagements. Consequently, he saw a good deal of Blanche, and became to her an object of reliance.

Well, it was simply one of those things that happen

only in fairy tales or in romances—or in real life. Littimer recovered without any serious illness, and, after a brief conference with Crombie, entered heartily into the young man's campaign. Crombie showed him just what combinations could be formed, how success could be achieved, and what lucrative results might be made to ensue. He conquered by figures and by lucid common-sense. Littimer agreed to buy a number of shares in the Engraving Company, which he happened to know could be purchased, and to advance Crombie a good sum with which to procure a portion of the same lot. But before this agreement could be consummated, Crombie, with his usual frankness, said to the banker:

"I will conceal nothing from you, Mr. Littimer. I fell in love with Blanche before I knew her, and if this venture of mine succeeds, I shall ask her to become my wife."

"Let us attend to business," said Littimer, severely. "Sentiment can take care of itself."

Their manœuvre went on so vigorously that Blatchford became alarmed, and sent an ambassador to arrange a compromise; but by this time Crombie had determined to oust Blatchford himself and elect an entirely new set of men, to compose more than half the Board, and so control everything.

He succeeded.

But Littimer did not forget the charitable enthusiasm which had been awakened by a circumstance on the surface so trivial as the mistake of a boot-boy. He did not desist from his interest in aiding disabled

or unfortunate people who could really be aided. Some time after Crombie had achieved his triumph in the Engraving Company, and had repaid Littimer's loan, he was admitted to a share in the banking business; and eventually the head of the house was able to give a great deal of attention to perfecting his benevolent plans.

When the details of their wedding were under discussion, Crombie said to Blanche: "Oughtn't we to have an old shoe thrown after the carriage as we drive away?"

She smiled; looked him full in the eyes with a peculiar tenderness in which there was a bright, delicious sparkle of humor. "No; old shoes are much too useful to be wasted that way."

Somehow she had possessed herself of that particular, providential pair; and, though I don't want anybody to laugh at my two friends, I must risk saying that I suspect Mrs. Crombie of preserving it somewhere to this day, in the big new house up-town.

THE DENVER EXPRESS

BY A. A. HAYES

Augustus Allen Hayes (born in New England in 1837, died in 1892) was the author of two works relating to the Far West which have placed on permanent record an interesting phase, now forever past, of the development of civilization in that region. "New Colorado and the Santa Fe Trail" is a descriptive book yielding the information of fact concerning the pioneer period of settlement in that region; and "The Denver Express" is a stirring piece of fiction vividly reproducing the spirit of those days when the forces of social order introduced by the railroad were battling with the primitive elements of vice and crime. The latter story, which is here reproduced, appeared in an English magazine, "Belgravia," where it was most favorably received by readers whose appetite for such fiction had already been whetted by the tales of Bret Harte.

THE DENVER EXPRESS

BY A. A. HAYES

ANY one who has seen an outward-bound clipper ship getting under way, and heard the "shanty-songs" sung by the sailors as they toiled at capstan and halliards, will probably remember that rhymeless but melodious refrain—

"I'm bound to see its muddy waters,
Yeo ho! that rolling river;
Bound to see its muddy waters,
Yeo ho! the wild Missouri."

Only a happy inspiration could have impelled Jack to apply the adjective "wild" to that ill-behaved and disreputable river which, tipsily bearing its enormous burden of mud from the far Northwest, totters, reels, runs its tortuous course for hundreds on hundreds of miles; and which, encountering the lordly and thus far well-behaved Mississippi at Alton, and forcing its company upon this splendid river (as if some drunken fellow should lock arms with a dignified pedestrian), contaminates it all the way to the Gulf of Mexico.

At a certain point on the banks of this river, or rather—as it has the habit of abandoning and destroying said banks—at a safe distance therefrom, there is a town from which a railroad takes its departure, for its long climb up the natural incline of the Great Plains,

From "Belgravia" for January, 1884.

to the base of the mountains; hence the importance to this town of the large but somewhat shabby building serving as terminal station. In its smoky interior, late in the evening and not very long ago, a train was nearly ready to start. It was a train possessing a certain consideration. For the benefit of a public easily gulled and enamored of grandiloquent terms, it was advertised as the "Denver Fast Express"; sometimes, with strange unfitness, as the "Lightning Express"; "elegant" and "palatial" cars were declared to be included therein; and its departure was one of the great events of the twenty-four hours in the country round about. A local poet described it in the "live" paper of the town, cribbing from an old Eastern magazine and passing off as original the lines—

> "Again we stepped into the street,
> A train came thundering by,
> Drawn by the snorting iron steed
> Swifter than eagles fly.
> Rumbled the wheels, the whistle shrieked,
> Far rolled the smoky cloud,
> Echoed the hills, the valleys shook,
> The flying forests bowed."

The trainmen, on the other hand, used no fine phrases. They called it simply "Number Seventeen"; and, when it started, said it had "pulled out."

On the evening in question, there it stood, nearly ready. Just behind the great hissing locomotive, with its parabolic headlight and its coal-laden tender, came the baggage, mail, and express cars; then the passenger coaches, in which the social condition of the occupants seemed to be in inverse ratio to their distance

from the engine. First came emigrants, "honest miners," "cowboys," and laborers; Irishmen, Germans, Welshmen, Mennonites from Russia, quaint of garb and speech, and Chinamen. Then came long cars full of people of better station, and last the great Pullman "sleepers," in which the busy black porters were making up the berths for well-to-do travelers of diverse nationalities and occupations.

It was a curious study for a thoughtful observer, this motley crowd of human beings sinking all differences of race, creed, and habits in the common purpose to move westward—to the mountain fastnesses, the sage-brush deserts and the Golden Gate.

The warning bell had sounded, and the fireman leaned far out for the signal. The gong struck sharply the conductor shouted, "All aboard," and raised his hand; the tired ticket-seller shut his window, and the train moved out of the station, gathered way as it cleared the outskirts of the town, rounded a curve, entered on an absolutely straight line, and, with one long whistle from the engine, settled down to its work. Through the night hours it sped on, past lonely ranches and infrequent stations, by and across shallow streams fringed with cottonwood trees, over the greenish-yellow buffalo grass near the old trail where many a poor emigrant, many a bold frontiersman, many a brave soldier, had laid his bones but a short time before.

Familiar as they may be, there is something strangely impressive about all-night journeys by rail, and those forming part of an American transcontinental trip are almost weird. From the windows of a night

express in Europe or the older portions of the United States, one looks on houses and lights, cultivated fields, fences, and hedges; and, hurled as he may be through the darkness, he has a sense of companionship and semi-security. Far different is it when the long train is running over those two rails which, seen before night set in, seem to meet on the horizon. Within all is as if between two great seaboard cities; the neatly dressed people, the uniformed officials, the handsome fittings, the various appliances for comfort. Without are now long dreary levels, now deep and wild canyons, now an environment of strange and grotesque rock-formations, castles, battlements, churches, statues. The antelope fleetly runs, and the coyote skulks away from the track, and the gray wolf howls afar off. It is for all the world, to one's fancy, as if a bit of civilization, a family or community, its belongings and surroundings complete, were flying through regions barbarous and inhospitable.

From the cab of Engine No. 32, the driver of the Denver Express saw, showing faintly in the early morning, the buildings grouped about the little station ten miles ahead, where breakfast awaited his passengers. He looked at his watch; he had just twenty minutes in which to run the distance, as he had run it often before. Something, however, traveled faster than he. From the smoky station out of which the train passed the night before, along the slender wire stretched on rough poles at the side of the track, a spark of that mysterious something which we call electricity flashed at the moment he returned the watch to

his pocket; and in five minutes' time the station-master came out on the platform, a little more thoughtful than his wont, and looked eastward for the smoke of the train. With but three of the passengers in that train has this tale especially to do, and they were all in the new and comfortable Pullman "City of Cheyenne." One was a tall, well-made man of about thirty—blond, blue-eyed, bearded, straight, sinewy, alert. Of all in the train he seemed the most thoroughly at home, and the respectful greeting of the conductor, as he passed through the car, marked him as an officer of the road. Such was he—Henry Sinclair, assistant engineer, quite famed on the line, high in favor with the directors, and a rising man in all ways. It was known on the road that he was expected in Denver, and there were rumors that he was to organize the parties for the survey of an important "extension." Beside him sat his pretty young wife. She was a New Yorker—one could tell at first glance—from the feather of her little bonnet, matching the gray traveling dress, to the tips of her dainty boots; and one, too, at whom old Fifth Avenue promenaders would have turned to look. She had a charming figure, brown hair, hazel eyes, and an expression at once kind, intelligent, and spirited. She had cheerfully left a luxurious home to follow the young engineer's fortunes; and it was well known that those fortunes had been materially advanced by her tact and cleverness.

The third passenger in question had just been in conversation with Sinclair and the latter was telling his wife of their curious meeting. Entering the toilet-

room at the rear of the car, he said, he had begun his ablutions by the side of another man, and it was as they were sluicing their faces with water that he heard the cry:

"Why, Major, is that you? Just to think of meeting you here!"

A man of about tweny-eight years of age, slight, muscular, wiry, had seized his wet hand and was wringing it. He had black eyes, keen and bright, swarthy complexion, black hair and mustache. A keen observer might have seen about him some signs of a *jeunesse orageuse,* but his manner was frank and pleasing. Sinclair looked him in the face, puzzled for a moment.

"Don't you remember Foster?" asked the man.

"Of course I do," replied Sinclair. "For a moment I could not place you. Where have you been and what have you been doing?"

"Oh," replied Foster, laughing, "I've braced up and turned over a new leaf. I'm a respectable member of society, have a place in the express company, and am going to Denver to take charge."

"I am very glad to hear it, and you must tell me your story when we have had our breakfast."

The pretty young woman was just about to ask who Foster was, when the speed of the train slackened, and the brakeman opened the door of the car and cried out in stentorian tones:

"Pawnee Junction; twenty minutes for refreshments!"

II

When the celebrated Rocky Mountain gold excitement broke out, more than twenty years ago, and people painted "PIKE'S PEAK OR BUST" on the canvas covers of their wagons and started for the diggings, they established a "trail" or "trace" leading in a southwesterly direction from the old one to California.

At a certain point on this trail a frontiersman named Barker built a forlorn ranch-house and *corral,* and offered what is conventionally called "entertainment for man and beast."

For years he lived there, dividing his time between fighting the Indians and feeding the passing emigrants and their stock. Then the first railroad to Denver was built, taking another route from the Missouri, and Barker's occupation was gone. He retired with his gains to St. Louis and lived in comfort.

Years passed on, and the "extension" over which our train is to pass was planned. The old pioneers were excellent natural engineers and their successors could find no better route than they had chosen. Thus it was that "Barker's" became, during the construction period, an important point, and the frontiersman's name came to figure on time-tables. Meanwhile the place passed through a process of evolution which would have delighted Darwin. In the party of engineers which first camped there was Sinclair and it was by his advice that the contractors selected it for division headquarters. Then came drinking "saloons" and gambling houses—alike the inevitable concom-

itant and the bane of Western settlements; then scattered houses and shops and a shabby so-called hotel, in which the letting of miserable rooms (divided from each other by canvas partitions) was wholly subordinated to the business of the bar. Before long, Barker's had acquired a worse reputation than even other towns of its type, the abnormal and uncanny aggregations of squalor and vice which dotted the plains in those days; and it was at its worst when Sinclair returned thither and took up his quarters in the engineers' building. The passion for gambling was raging, and to pander thereto were collected as choice a lot of desperadoes as ever "stacked" cards or loaded dice. It came to be noticed that they were on excellent terms with a man called "Jeff" Johnson, who was lessee of the hotel; and to be suspected that said Johnson, in local parlance, "stood in with" them. With this man had come to Barker's his daughter Sarah, commonly known as "Sally," a handsome girl, with a straight, lithe figure, fine features, reddish auburn hair, and dark-blue eyes. It is but fair to say that even the "toughs" of a place like Barker's show some respect for the other sex, and Miss Sally's case was no exception to the rule. The male population admired her; they said she "put on heaps of style"; but none of them had seemed to make any progress in her good graces.

On a pleasant afternoon just after the track had been laid some miles west of Barker's, and construction trains were running with some regularity to and from the end thereof, Sinclair sat on the rude veranda of the engineers' quarters, smoking his well-colored meer-

schaum and looking at the sunset. The atmosphere had been so clear during the day that glimpses were had of Long's and Pike's peaks, and as the young engineer gazed at the gorgeous cloud display he was thinking of the miners' quaint and pathetic idea that the dead "go over the Range."

"Nice-looking, ain't it, Major?" asked a voice at his elbow, and he turned to see one of the contractors' officials taking a seat near him.

"More than nice-looking to my mind, Sam," he replied. "What is the news to-day?"

"Nothin' much. There's a sight of talk about the doin's of them faro an' keno sharps. The boys is gettin' kind o' riled, fur they allow the game ain't on the square wuth a cent. Some of 'em down to the tie-camp wuz a-talkin' about a vigilance committee, an' I wouldn't be surprised ef they meant business. Hev yer heard about the young feller that come in a week ago from Laramie an' set up a new faro-bank?"

"No. What about him?"

"Wa'al, yer see he's a feller thet's got a lot of sand an' ain't afeared of nobody, an' he's allowed to hev the deal to his place on the square every time. Accordin' to my idee, gamblin's about the wust racket a feller kin work, but it takes all sorts of men to make a world, an' ef the boys is bound to hev a game, I calkilate they'd like to patronize his bank. Thet's made the old crowd mighty mad an' they're a-talkin' about puttin' up a job of cheatin' on him an' then stringin' him up. Besides, I kind o' think there's some cussed jealousy on another lay as comes in. Yer see the

young feller—Cyrus Foster's his name—is sweet on thet gal of Jeff Johnson's. Jeff wuz to Laramie before he come here, an' Foster knowed Sally up thar. I allow he moved here to see her. Hello! Ef thar they ain't a-coming now."

Down a path leading from the town past the railroad buildings, and well on the prairie, Sinclair saw the girl walking with the "young feller." He was talking earnestly to her and her eyes were cast down. She looked pretty and, in a way, graceful; and there was in her attire a noticeable attempt at neatness, and a faint reminiscence of bygone fashions. A smile came to Sinclair's lips as he thought of a couple walking up Fifth Avenue during his leave of absence not many months before, and of a letter many times read, lying at that moment in his breast-pocket.

"Papa's bark is worse than his bite," ran one of its sentences. "Of course he does not like the idea of my leaving him and going away to such dreadful and remote places as Denver and Omaha and I don't know what else; but he will not oppose me in the end, and when you come on again—"

"By thunder!" exclaimed Sam; "ef thar ain't one of them cussed sharps a-watchin' 'em."

Sure enough a rough-looking fellow, his hat pulled over his eyes, half concealed behind a pile of lumber, was casting a sinister glance toward the pair.

"The gal's well enough," continued Sam; "but I don't take a cent's wuth of stock in thet thar father of her'n. He's in with them sharps, sure pop, an' it don't suit his book to hev Foster hangin' round. It's

ten to one he sent that cuss to watch 'em. Wa'al, they're a queer lot, an' I'm afeared thar's plenty of trouble ahead among 'em. Good luck to you, Major," and he pushed back his chair and walked away.

After breakfast next morning, when Sinclair was sitting at the table in his office, busy with maps and plans, the door was thrown open, and Foster, panting for breath, ran in.

"Major Sinclair," he said, speaking with difficulty, "I've no claim on you, but I ask you to protect me. The other gamblers are going to hang me. They are more than ten to one. They will track me here; unless you harbor me, I'm a dead man."

Sinclair rose from his chair in a second and walked to the window. A party of men were approaching the building. He turned to Foster:

"I do not like your trade," said he; "but I will not see you murdered if I can help it. You are welcome here." Foster said "Thank you," stood still a moment, and then began to pace the room, rapidly clinching his hands, his whole frame quivering, his eyes flashing fire—"for all the world," Sinclair said, in telling the story afterward, "like a fierce caged tiger."

"My God!" he muttered, with concentrated intensity, "to be *trapped,* TRAPPED like this!"

Sinclair stepped quickly to the door of his bedroom and motioned Foster to enter. Then there came a knock at the outer door, and he opened it and stood on the threshold erect and firm. Half a dozen "toughs" faced him.

"Major," said their spokesman, "we want that man."

"You can not have him, boys."

"Major, we're a-goin' to take him."

"You had better not try," said Sinclair, with perfect ease and self-possession, and in a pleasant voice. "I have given him shelter, and you can only get him over my dead body. Of course you can kill me, but you won't do even that without one or two of you going down; and then you know perfectly well, boys, what will happen. You *know* that if you lay your finger on a railroad man it's all up with you. There are five hundred men in the tie-camp, not five miles away, and you don't need to be told that in less than one hour after they get word there won't be a piece of one of you big enough to bury."

The men made no reply. They looked him straight in the eyes for a moment. Had they seen a sign of flinching they might have risked the issue, but there was none. With muttered curses, they slunk away. Sinclair shut and bolted the door, then opened the one leading to the bedroom.

"Foster," he said, "the train will pass here in half an hour. Have you money enough?"

"Plenty, Major."

"Very well; keep perfectly quiet and I will try to get you safely off." He went to an adjoining room and called Sam, the contractor's man. He took in the situation at a glance.

"Wa'al, Foster," said he, "kind o' 'close call' for yer, warn't it? Guess yer'd better be gittin' up an'

gittin' pretty lively. The train boys will take yer through an' yer kin come back when this racket's worked out."

Sinclair glanced at his watch, then he walked to the window and looked out. On a small *mesa,* or elevated plateau, commanding the path to the railroad, he saw a number of men with rifles.

"Just as I expected," said he. "Sam, ask one of the boys to go down to the track and, when the train arrives, tell the conductor to come here."

In a few minutes the whistle was heard and the conductor entered the building. Receiving his instructions, he returned, and immediately on engine, tender, and platform appeared the trainmen, with *their* rifles covering the group on the bluff. Sinclair put on his hat.

"Now, Foster," said he, "we have no time to lose. Take Sam's arm and mine, and walk between us."

The trio left the building and walked deliberately to the railroad. Not a word was spoken. Besides the men in sight on the train, two behind the window-blinds of the one passenger coach, and unseen, kept their fingers on the triggers of their repeating carbines. It seemed a long time, counted by anxious seconds, until Foster was safe in the coach.

"All ready, conductor," said Sinclair. "Now, Foster, good-by. I am not good at lecturing, but if I were you, I would make this the turning-point in my life."

Foster was much moved.

"I will do it, Major," said he; "and I shall never

forget what you have done for me to-day. I am sure we shall meet again."

With another shriek from the whistle the train started. Sinclair and Sam saw the men quietly returning the firearms to their places as it gathered way. Then they walked back to their quarters. The men on the *mesa*, balked of their purpose, had withdrawn.

Sam accompanied Sinclair to his door, and then sententiously remarked: "Major, I think I'll light out and find some of the boys. You ain't got no call to know anything about it, but I allow it's about time them cusses was bounced."

Three nights after this, a powerful party of *Vigilantes*, stern and inexorable, made a raid on all the gambling dens, broke the tables and apparatus, and conducted the men to a distance from the town, where they left them with an emphatic and concise warning as to the consequences of any attempt to return. An exception was made in Jeff Johnson's case—but only for the sake of his daughter—for it was found that many a "little game" had been carried on in his house.

Ere long he found it convenient to sell his business and retire to a town some miles to the eastward, where the railroad influence was not as strong as at Barker's. At about this time, Sinclair made his arrangements to go to New York, with the pleasant prospect of marrying the young lady in Fifth Avenue. In due time he arrived at Barker's with his young and charming wife and remained for some days. The changes were astounding. Commonplace respectability had replaced abnormal lawlessness. A neat

station stood where had been the rough contractor's buildings. At a new "Windsor" (or was it "Brunswick"?) the performance of the kitchen contrasted sadly (alas! how common is such contrast in these regions) with the promise of the *menu*. There was a tawdry theatre yclept "Academy of Music," and there was not much to choose in the way of ugliness between two "meeting-houses."

"Upon my word, my dear," said Sinclair to his wife, "I ought to be ashamed to say it, but I prefer Barker's *au naturel*."

One evening, just before the young people left the town, and as Mrs. Sinclair sat alone in her room, the frowzy waitress announced "a lady," and was requested to bid her enter. A woman came with timid mien into the room, sat down, as invited, and removed her veil. Of course the young bride had never known Sally Johnson, the whilom belle of Barker's, but her husband would have noticed at a glance how greatly she was changed from the girl who walked with Foster past the engineers' quarters. It would be hard to find a more striking contrast than was presented by the two women as they sat facing each other: the one in the flush of health and beauty, calm, sweet, self-possessed; the other still retaining some of the shabby finery of old days, but pale and haggard, with black rings under her eyes, and a pathetic air of humiliation.

"Mrs. Sinclair," she hurriedly began, "you do not know me, nor the like of me. I've got no right to speak to you, but I couldn't help it. Oh! please be-

lieve me, I am not real downright bad. I'm Sally Johnson, daughter of a man whom they drove out of the town. My mother died when I was little, and I *never* had a show; and folks think because I live with my father, and he makes me know the crowd he travels with, that I must be in with them, and be of their sort. I never had a woman speak a kind word to me, and I've had so much trouble that I'm just drove wild, and like to kill myself; and then I was at the station when you came in, and I saw your sweet face and the kind look in your eyes, and it came in my heart that I'd speak to you if I died for it." She leaned eagerly forward, her hands nervously closing on the back of a chair. "I suppose your husband never told you of me; like enough he never knew me; but I'll never forget him as long as I live. When he was here before, there was a young man"—here a faint color came in the wan cheeks—"who was fond of me, and I thought the world of him, and my father was down on him, and the men that father was in with wanted to kill him; and Mr. Sinclair saved his life. He's gone away, and I've waited and waited for him to come back—and perhaps I'll never see him again. But oh! dear lady, I'll never forget what your husband did. He's a good man, and he deserves the love of a dear good woman like you, and if I dared I'd pray for you both, night and day."

She stopped suddenly and sank back in her seat, pale as before, and as if frightened by her own emotion. Mrs. Sinclair had listened with sympathy and increasing interest.

"My poor girl," she said, speaking tenderly (she had a lovely, soft voice) and with slightly heightened color, "I am delighted that you came to see me, and that my husband was able to help you. Tell me, can we not do more for you? I do not for one moment believe you can be happy with your present surroundings. Can we not assist you to leave them?"

The girl rose, sadly shaking her head. "I thank you for your words," she said. "I don't suppose I'll ever see you again, but I'll say, God bless you!"

She caught Mrs. Sinclair's hand, pressed it to her lips, and was gone.

Sinclair found his wife very thoughtful when he came home, and he listened with much interest to her story.

"Poor girl!" said he; "Foster is the man to help her. I wonder where he is? I must inquire about him."

The next day they proceeded on their way to San Francisco, and matters drifted on at Barker's much as before. Johnson had, after an absence of some months, come back and lived without molestation amid the shifting population. Now and then, too, some of the older residents fancied they recognized, under slouched sombreros, the faces of some of his former "crowd" about the "Ranchman's Home," as his gaudy saloon was called.

Late on the very evening on which this story opens, and they had been "making up" the Denver Express in the train-house on the Missouri, "Jim" Watkins, agent and telegrapher at Barker's, was sitting in his

little office, communicating with the station rooms by the ticket window. Jim was a cool, silent, efficient man, and not much given to talk about such episodes in his past life as the "wiping out" by Indians of the construction party to which he belonged, and his own rescue by the scouts. He was smoking an old and favorite pipe, and talking with one of "the boys" whose head appeared at the wicket. On a seat in the station sat a woman in a black dress and veil, apparently waiting for a train.

"Got a heap of letters and telegrams there, ain't yer, Jim?" remarked the man at the window.

"Yes," replied Jim; "they're for Engineer Sinclair, to be delivered to him when he passes through here. He left on No. 17, to-night." The inquirer did not notice the sharp start of the woman near him.

"Is that good-lookin' wife of his'n a-comin' with him?" asked he.

"Yes, there's letters for her, too."

"Well, good-night, Jim. See yer later," and he went out. The woman suddenly rose and ran to the window.

"Mr. Watkins," cried she, "can I see you for a few moments where no one can interrupt us? It's a matter of life and death." She clutched the sill with her thin hands, and her voice trembled. Watkins recognized Sally Johnson in a moment. He unbolted a door, motioned her to enter, closed and again bolted it, and also closed the ticket window. Then he pointed to a chair, and the girl sat down and leaned eagerly forward.

"If they knew I was here," she said in a hoarse

whisper, "my life wouldn't be safe five minutes. I was waiting to tell you a terrible story, and then I heard who was on the train due here to-morrow night. Mr. Watkins, don't, for God's sake, ask me how I found out, but I hope to die if I ain't telling you the living truth! They're going to wreck that train—No. 17—at Dead Man's Crossing, fifteen miles east, and rob the passengers and the express car. It's the worst gang in the country, *Perry's*. They're going to throw the train off the track, the passengers will be maimed and killed —and Mr. Sinclair and his wife on the cars! Oh! my God! Mr. Watkins, send them warning!"

She stood upright, her face deadly pale, her hands clasped. Watkins walked deliberately to the railroad map which hung on the wall and scanned it. Then he resumed his seat, laid his pipe down, fixed his eyes on the girl's face, and began to question her. At the same time his right hand, with which he had held the pipe, found its way to the telegraph key. None but an expert could have distinguished any change in the *clicking* of the instrument, which had been almost incessant; but Watkins had "called" the head office on the Missouri. In two minutes the "sounder" rattled out "*All right! What is it?*"

Watkins went on with his questions, his eyes still fixed on the poor girl's face, and all the time his fingers, as it were, playing with the key. If he were imperturbable, so was *not* a man sitting at a receiving instrument nearly five hundred miles away. He had "taken" but a few words when he jumped from his chair and cried:

"Shut that door, and call the superintendent and be quick! Charley, brace up—lively—and come and write this out!" With his wonderful electric pen, the handle several hundreds of miles long, Watkins, unknown to his interlocutor, was printing in the Morse alphabet this startling message:

"Inform'n rec'd. Perry gang going to throw No. 17 off track near —xth mile-post, this division, about nine to-morrow (Thursday) night, kill passengers, and rob express and mail. Am alone here. No chance to verify story, but believe it to be on square. Better make arrangements from your end to block game. No Sheriff here now. Answer."

The superintendent, responding to the hasty summons, heard the message before the clerk had time to write it out. His lips were closely compressed as he put his own hand on the key and sent these laconic sentences: *"O. K. Keep perfectly dark. Will manage from this end."*

Watkins, at Barker's, rose from his seat, opened the door a little way, saw that the station was empty, and then said to the girl, brusquely, but kindly:

"Sally, you've done the square thing, and saved that train. I'll take care that you don't suffer and that you get well paid. Now come home with me, and my wife will look out for you."

"Oh! no," cried the girl, shrinking back, "I must run away. You're mighty kind, but I daren't go with you." Detecting a shade of doubt in his eye, she added: "Don't be afeared; I'll die before they'll know I've given them away to you!" and she disappeared in the darkness.

At the other end of the wire, the superintendent had

quietly impressed secrecy on his operator and clerk, ordered his fast mare harnessed, and gone to his private office.

"Read that!" said he to his secretary. "It was about time for some trouble of this kind, and now I'm going to let Uncle Sam take care of his mails. If I don't get to the reservation before the General's turned in, I shall have to wake him up. Wait for me, please."

The gray mare made the six miles to the military reservation in just half an hour. The General was smoking his last cigar, and was alert in an instant; and before the superintendent had finished the jorum of "hot Scotch" hospitably tendered, the orders had gone by wire to the commanding officer at Fort ——, some distance east of Barker's, and been duly acknowledged.

Returning to the station, the superintendent remarked to the waiting secretary:

"The General's all right. Of course we can't tell that this is not a sell; but if those Perry hounds mean business they'll get all the fight they want—and if they've got any souls—which I doubt—may the Lord have mercy on them!"

He prepared several despatches, two of which were as follows:

"Mr. Henry Sinclair:

"On No. 17, Pawnee Junction:

This telegram your authority to take charge of train on which you are, and demand obedience of all officials and trainmen on road. Please do so, and act in accordance with information wired station agent at Pawnee Junction."

To the Station Agent:

"Reported Perry gang will try wreck and rob No. 17 near —xth mile-post, Denver Division, about nine Thursday night. Troops will await train at Fort ———. Car ordered ready for them. Keep everything secret, and act in accordance with orders of Mr. Sinclair."

"It's worth about ten thousand dollars," sententiously remarked he, "that Sinclair's on that train. He's got both sand and brains. Good-night," and he went to bed and slept the sleep of the just.

III

The sun never shone more brightly and the air was never more clear and bracing than when Sinclair helped his wife off the train at Pawnee Junction. The station-master's face fell as he saw the lady, but he saluted the engineer with as easy an air as he could assume, and watched for an opportunity to speak to him alone. Sinclair read the despatches with an unmoved countenance, and after a few minutes' reflection simply said: "All right. Be sure to keep the matter perfectly quiet." At breakfast he was *distrait* —so much so that his wife asked him what was the matter. Taking her aside, he at once showed her the telegrams.

"You see my duty," he said. "My only thought is about you, my dear child. Will you stay here?"

She simply replied, looking into his face without a tremor:

"My place is with you." Then the conductor called "All aboard," and the train once more started.

Sinclair asked Foster to join him in the smoking compartment and tell him the promised story, which the latter did. His rescue at Barker's, he frankly and gratefully said, *had* been the turning point in his life. In brief, he had "sworn off" from gambling and drinking, had found honest employment, and was doing well.

"I've two things to do now, Major," he added; "first, I must show my gratitude to you; and next"—he hesitated a little—"I want to find that poor girl that I left behind at Barker's. She was engaged to marry me, and when I came to think of it, and what a life I'd have made her lead, I hadn't the heart till now to look for her; but, seeing I'm on the right track, I'm going to find her, and get her to come with me. Her father's an—old scoundrel, but that ain't her fault, and I ain't going to marry *him*."

"Foster," quietly asked Sinclair, "do you know the Perry gang?"

The man's brow darkened.

"Know them?" said he. "I know them much too well. Perry is as ungodly a cutthroat as ever killed an emigrant in cold blood, and he's got in his gang nearly all those hounds that tried to hang me. Why do you ask, Major?"

Sinclair handed him the despatches. "You are the only man on the train to whom I have shown them," said he.

Foster read them slowly, his eyes lighting up as he did so. "Looks as if it was true," said he. "Let me see! Fort ——. Yes, that's the —th infantry. Two

of their boys were killed at Sidney last summer by some of the same gang, and the regiment's sworn vengeance. Major, if this story's on the square, that crowd's goose is cooked, and *don't you forget it!* I say, you must give me a hand in."

"Foster," said Sinclair, "I am going to put responsibility on your shoulders. I have no doubt that, if we be attacked, the soldiers will dispose of the gang; but I must take all possible precautions for the safety of the passengers. We must not alarm them. They can be made to think that the troops are going on a scout, and only a certain number of resolute men need be told of what we expect. Can you, late this afternoon, go through the cars, and pick them out? I will then put you in charge of the passenger cars, and you can post your men on the platforms to act in case of need. My place will be ahead."

"Major, you can depend on me," was Foster's reply. "I'll go through the train and have my eye on some boys of the right sort, and that's got their shooting-irons with them."

Through the hours of that day on rolled the train, still over the crisp buffalo grass, across the well-worn buffalo trails, past the prairie-dog villages. The passengers chatted, dozed, played cards, read, all unconscious, with the exception of three, of the coming conflict between the good and the evil forces bearing on their fate; of the fell preparations making for their disaster; of the grim preparations making to avert such disaster; of all of which the little wires alongside of them had been talking back and forth. Wat-

kins had telegraphed that he still saw no reason to doubt the good faith of his warning, and Sinclair had reported his receipt of authority and his acceptance thereof. Meanwhile, also, there had been set in motion a measure of that power to which appeal is so reluctantly made in time of peace. At Fort ——, a lonely post on the plains, the orders had that morning been issued for twenty men under Lieutenant Halsey to parade at 4 P. M., with overcoats, two days' rations, and ball cartridges; also for Assistant Surgeon Kesler to report for duty with the party. Orders as to destination were communicated direct to the lieutenant from the post commander, and on the minute the little column moved, taking the road to the station. The regiment from which it came had been in active service among the Indians on the frontier for a long time, and the officers and men were tried and seasoned fighters. Lieutenant Halsey had been well known at the West Point balls as the "leader of the german." From the last of these balls he had gone straight to the field, and three years had given him an enviable reputation for *sang-froid* and determined bravery. He looked every inch the soldier as he walked along the trail, his cloak thrown back and his sword tucked under his arm. The doctor, who carried a Modoc bullet in some inaccessible part of his scarred body, growled good-naturedly at the need of walking, and the men, enveloped in their army-blue overcoats, marched easily by fours. Reaching the station, the lieutenant called the agent aside, and with him inspected, on a siding, a long platform car on which

benches had been placed and secured. Then he took his seat in the station and quietly waited, occasionally twisting his long blond mustache. The doctor took a cigar with the agent, and the men walked about or sat on the edge of the platform. One of them, who obtained a surreptitious glance at his silent commander, told his companions that there was trouble ahead for somebody.

"That's just the way the leftenant looked, boys," said he, "when we was laying for them Apaches that raided Jones's Ranch and killed the women and little children."

In a short time the officer looked at his watch, formed his men, and directed them to take their places on the seats of the car. They had hardly done so when the whistle of the approaching train was heard. When it came up, the conductor, who had his instructions from Sinclair, had the engine detached and backed on the siding for the soldiers' car, which thus came between it and the foremost baggage car when the train was again made up. As arranged, it was announced that the troops were to be taken a certain distance to join a scouting party, and the curiosity of the passengers was but slightly excited. The soldiers sat quietly in their seats, their repeating rifles held between their knees, and the officer in front. Sinclair joined the latter, and had a few words with him as the train moved on. A little later, when the stars were shining brightly overhead, they passed into the express car, and sent for the conductor and other trainmen, and for Foster. In a few words Sinclair

explained the position of affairs. His statement was received with perfect coolness, and the men only asked what they were to do.

"I hope, boys," said Sinclair, "that we are going to put this gang to-night where they will make no more trouble. Lieutenant Halsey will bear the brunt of the fight, and it only remains for you to stand by the interests committed to your care. Mr. Express Agent, what help do you want?" The person addressed, a good-natured giant, girded with a cartridge belt, smiled as he replied:

"Well, sir, I'm wearing a watch which the company gave me for standing off the James gang in Missouri for half an hour, when we hadn't the ghost of a soldier about. I'll take the contract, and welcome, to hold *this* fort alone."

"Very well," said Sinclair. "Foster, what progress have you made?"

"Major, I've got ten or fifteen as good men as ever drew a bead, and just red-hot for a fight."

"That will do very well. Conductor, give the trainmen the rifles from the baggage car and let them act under Mr. Foster. Now, boys, I am sure you will do your duty. That is all."

From the next station Sinclair telegraphed "All ready" to the superintendent, who was pacing his office in much suspense. Then he said a few words to his brave but anxious wife, and walked to the rear platform. On it were several armed men, who bade him good-evening, and asked "when the fun was going to begin." Walking through the train, he found

each platform similarly occupied, and Foster going from one to the other. The latter whispered as he passed him:

"Major, I found Arizona Joe, the scout, in the smokin' car, and he's on the front platform. That lets me out, and although I know as well as you that there ain't any danger about that rear sleeper where the madam is, I ain't a-going to be far off from her." Sinclair shook him by the hand; then he looked at his watch. It was half-past eight. He passed through the baggage and express cars, finding in the latter the agent sitting behind his safe, on which lay two large revolvers. On the platform car he found the soldiers and their commander sitting silent and unconcerned as before. When Sinclair reached the latter and nodded, he rose and faced the men, and his fine voice was clearly heard above the rattle of the train.

"Company, *'tention!*" The soldiers straightened themselves in a second.

"With ball cartridge, *load!*" It was done with the precision of a machine. Then the lieutenant spoke, in the same clear, crisp, tones that the troops had heard in more than one fierce battle.

"Men," said he, "in a few minutes the Perry gang, which you will remember, are going to try to run this train off the track, wound and kill the passengers, and rob the cars and the United States mail. It is our business to prevent them. Sergeant Wilson" (a gray-bearded non-commissioned officer stood up and saluted), "I am going on the engine. See that my orders are repeated. Now, men, aim low, and don't

waste any shots." He and Sinclair climbed over the tender and spoke to the engine-driver.

"How are the air-brakes working?" asked Sinclair.

"First-rate."

"Then, if you slowed down now, you could stop the train in a third of her length, couldn't you?"

"Easy, if you don't mind being shaken up a bit."

"That is good. How is the country about the —xth mile-post?"

"Dead level, and smooth."

"Good again. Now, Lieutenant Halsey, this is a splendid head-light, and we can see a long way with my night glass. I will have a—"

"—2d mile-pole just past," interrupted the engine-driver.

"Only one more to pass, then, before we ought to strike them. Now, lieutenant, I undertake to stop the train within a very short distance of the gang. They will be on both sides of the track, no doubt; and the ground, as you hear, is quite level. You will best know what to do."

The officer stepped back. "Sergeant," called he, "do you hear me plainly?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have the men fix bayonets. When the train stops, and I wave my sword, let half jump off each side, run up quickly, and form line *abreast of the engine*—not ahead."

"Jack," said Sinclair to the engine-driver, "is your hand steady?" The man held it up with a smile. "Good. Now stand by your throttle and your air-

brake. Lieutenant, better warn the men to hold on tight, and tell the sergeant to pass the word to the boys on the platforms, or they will be knocked off by the sudden stop. Now for a look ahead!" and he brought the binocular to his eyes.

The great parabolic head-light illuminated the track a long way in advance, all behind it being of course in darkness. Suddenly Sinclair cried out:

"The fools have a light there, as I am a living man; and there is a little red one near us. What can that be? All ready, Jack! By heaven! they have taken up two rails. Now *hold on, all!* STOP HER!!"

The engine-driver shut his throttle-valve with a jerk. Then, holding hard by it, he sharply turned a brass handle. There was a fearful jolt—a grating —and the train's way was checked. The lieutenant, standing sidewise, had drawn his sword. He waved it, and almost before he could get off the engine the soldiers were up and forming, still in shadow, while the bright light was thrown on a body of men ahead.

"Surrender, or you are dead men!" roared the officer. Curses and several shots were the reply. Then came the orders, quick and sharp:

"Forward! Close up! Double-quick! Halt! FIRE!" . . . It was speedily over. Left on the car with the men, the old sergeant had said:

"Boys, you hear. It's that —— Perry gang. Now, don't forget Larry and Charley that they murdered last year," and there had come from the soldiers a sort of fierce, subdued *growl.* The volley was followed by a bayonet charge, and it required all the

officer's authority to save the lives even of those who "threw up their hands." Large as the gang was (outnumbering the troops), well armed and desperate as they were, every one was dead, wounded, or a prisoner when the men who guarded the train platforms ran up. The surgeon, with professional coolness, walked up to the robbers, his instrument case under his arm.

"Not much for me to do here, Lieutenant," said he. "That practice for Creedmoor is telling on the shooting. Good thing for the gang, too. Bullets are better than rope, and a Colorado jury will give them plenty of that."

Sinclair had sent a man to tell his wife that all was over. Then he ordered a fire lighted, and the rails relaid. The flames lit a strange scene as the passengers flocked up. The lieutenant posted men to keep them back.

"Is there a telegraph station not far ahead, Sinclair?" asked he. "Yes? All right." He drew a small pad from his pocket, and wrote a despatch to the post commander.

"Be good enough to send that for me," said he, "and leave orders at Barker's for the night express eastward to stop for us, and bring a posse to take care of the wounded and prisoners. And now, my dear Sinclair, I suggest that you get the passengers into the cars, and go on as soon as those rails are spiked. When they realize the situation, some of them will feel precious ugly, and you know we can't have any lynching."

Sinclair glanced at the rails and gave the word at once to the conductor and brakemen, who began vociferating, "All aboard!" Just then Foster appeared, an expression of intense satisfaction showing clearly on his face, in the firelight.

"Major," said he, "I didn't use to take much stock in special Providence, or things being ordered; but I'm darned if I don't believe in them from this day. I was bound to stay where you put me, but I was uneasy, and wild to be in the scrimmage; and, if I had been there, I wouldn't have taken notice of a little red light that wasn't much behind the rear platform when we stopped. When I saw there was no danger there I ran back, and what do you think I found? There was a woman in a dead faint, and just clutching a lantern that she had tied up in a red scarf, poor little thing! And, Major, it was Sally! It was the little girl that loved me out at Barker's, and has loved me and waited for me ever since! And when she came to, and knew me, she was so glad she 'most fainted away again; and she let on as it was her that gave away the job. And I took her into the sleeper, and the madam, God bless her!—she knew Sally before and was good to her—she took care of her and is cheering her up. And now, Major, I'm going to take her straight to Denver, and send for a parson and get her married to me, and she'll brace up, sure pop."

The whistle sounded, and the train started. From the window of the "sleeper" Sinclair and his wife took their last look at the weird scene. The lieutenant, standing at the side of the track, wrapped in his

cloak, caught a glimpse of Mrs. Sinclair's pretty face, and returned her bow. Then, as the car passed out of sight, he tugged at his mustache and hummed:

"Why, boys, why,
Should we be melancholy, boys,
Whose business 'tis to die?"

In less than an hour, telegrams having in the meantime been sent in both directions, the train ran alongside the platform at Barker's; and Watkins, imperturbable as usual, met Sinclair, and gave him his letters.

"Perry gang wiped out, I hear, Major," said he. "Good thing for the country. That's a lesson the 'toughs' in these parts won't forget for a long time. Plucky girl that give 'em away, wasn't she? Hope she's all right."

"She is all right," said Sinclair with a smile.

"Glad of that. By the way, that father of her'n passed in his checks to-night. He'd got one warning from the Vigilantes, and yesterday they found out he was in with this gang, and they was a-going for him; but when the telegram come, he put a pistol to his head and saved them all trouble. Good riddance to everybody, I say. The sheriff's here now, and is going east on the next train to get them fellows. He's got a big posse together, and I wouldn't wonder if they was hard to hold in, after the 'boys in blue' is gone."

In a few minutes the train was off, and its living freight—the just and the unjust, the reformed and the rescued, the happy and the anxious. With many

of the passengers the episode of the night was already a thing of the past. Sinclair sat by the side of his wife, to whose cheeks the color had all come back; and Sally Johnson lay in her berth, faint still, but able to give an occasional smile to Foster. In the station on the Missouri the reporters were gathered about the happy superintendent, smoking his cigars, and filling their note-books with items. In Denver, their brethren would gladly have done the same, but Watkins failed to gratify them. He was a man of few words. When the train had gone, and a friend remarked: "Hope they'll get through all right, now," he simply said: "Yes, likely. Two shots don't 'most always go in the same hole." Then he went to the telegraph instrument. In a few minutes he could have told a story as wild as a Norse *saga,* but what he said, when Denver had responded, was only—

"No. 17, fifty-five minutes late."

JAUNE D'ANTIMOINE

BY THOMAS ALLIBONE JANVIER

Thomas Allibone Janvier (born in Philadelphia in 1849) began work as a journalist in his native city in 1870. In 1881 he went to spend several years in Colorado, and New and Old Mexico—sojourns which left their impression upon his literary work, A well-known writer of short stories, Janvier is especially skilled in the delineation of the picturesque foreign life of New York.

JAUNE D'ANTIMOINE

BY THOMAS ALLIBONE JANVIER

DOWN Greenwich way—that is to say, about in the heart of the city of New York—in a room with a glaring south light that made even the thought of painting in it send shivers all over you, Jaune d'Antimoine lived and labored in the service of Art.

By all odds, it was the very worst room in the whole building; and that was precisely the reason why Jaune d'Antimoine had chosen it, for the rent was next to nothing: he would have preferred a room that rented for even less. It certainly was a forlorn-looking place. There was no furniture in it worth speaking of; it was cheerless, desolate. A lot of studies of animals were stuck against the walls, and a couple of finished pictures—a lioness with her cubs, and a span of stunning draught-horses —stood in one corner, frameless. There was good work in the studies, and the pictures really were capital—a fact that Jaune himself recognized, and that made him feel all the more dismal because they so persistently remained unsold. Indeed, this animal painter was having a pretty hard time of it, and as he sat there day after day in the shocking light, doing

By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons. From "Color Studies and a Mexican Campaign," copyright, 1891.

honest work and getting no return for it, he could not help growing desperately blue.

But to-day Jaune d'Antimoine was not blue, for of a sudden he had come to be stayed by a lofty purpose and upheld by a high resolve: and his purpose and resolve were that within one month's time he would gain for himself a new suit of clothes! There were several excellent reasons which together served to fortify him in his exalted resolution. The most careless observer could not fail to perceive that the clothes which he wore—and which were incomparably superior to certain others which he possessed, but did not wear—were sadly shabby; and Vandyke Brown had asked him to be best man at his wedding; and further—and this was the strongest reason of all—Jaune d'Antimoine longed, from the very depths of his soul, to make himself pleasing in the eyes of Rose Carthame.

How she managed it none but herself knew; but this charming young person, although the daughter of a widowly exile of France who made an uncertain living by letting lodgings in the region between south and west of Washington Square, always managed to dress herself delightfully. It is true that feminine analysis might reveal the fact that the materials of which her gowns were made were of the cheapest product of the loom; yet was feminine envy aroused —yea, even in the dignified portion of Fifth Avenue that lies not south but north of Washington Square— by the undeniable style of these same gowns, and by their charming accord with the stylish gait and air

of the trig little body who wore them. Therefore it was that when Monsieur Jaune graciously was permitted to accompany Mademoiselle Rose in her jaunts into the grand quarter of the town, the propriety of her garments and the impropriety of his own brought a sense of desolation upon his spirit and a great heaviness upon his loyal heart.

For Jaune loved Rose absolutely to distraction. To say that he would have laid his coat in the mud for her to walk over does not—the condition of the coat being remembered—imply a very superior sort of devotion. He would have done more than this; he would have laid himself in the mud, and most gladly, that he might have preserved from contamination her single pair of nice shoes. Even a cool and unprejudiced person, being permitted to see these shoes—and he certainly would have been, for Rose made anything but a mystery of them—would have declared that such gallant sacrifice was well bestowed.

The ardor of Jaune's passion was increased—as has been common in love matters ever since the world began—by the knowledge that he had a rival; and this rival was a most dangerous rival, being none other than Madame Carthame's second-story-front lodger, the Count Siccatif de Courtray. Simply to be the second-story-front lodger carries with it a most notable distinction in a lodging-house; but to be that and a count too was a combination of splendors that placed Jaune's rival on a social pinnacle and kept him there. Not that counts are rare in the region between west and south of Washington Square; on the contrary,

they are rather astonishingly plentiful. But the sort of count who is very rare indeed there is the count who pays his way as he goes along. Now, in the matter of payments, at least so far as Madame Carthame was concerned, the Count Siccatif de Courtray was exemplary.

That there was something of a mystery about this nobleman was undeniable. Among other things, he had stated that he was a relative of the Siccatifs of Harlem—the old family established here in New Amsterdam in the early days of the Dutch Colony. Persons disposed to comment invidiously upon this asserted relationship, and such there were, did not fail to draw attention to the fact that the Harlem Siccatifs, without exception, were fair, while the Count Siccatif de Courtray was strikingly dark; and to the further fact that, if the distinguished American family really was akin to the Count, its several members were most harmoniously agreed to give him the cold shoulder. With these malicious whisperings, however, Madame Carthame did not concern herself. She was content, more than content, to take the Count as he was, and at his own valuation. That he was a proscribed Bonapartist, as he declared himself to be, seemed to her a reasonable and entirely credible statement; and it certainly had the effect of creating about him a halo of romance. Though not proscribed, Madame Carthame herself was a Bonapartist, and a most ardent one; a fact, it may be observed, concerning which the Count assured himself prior to the avowal of his own political convictions. When, on

the 20th of April, he came home wearing a cluster of violets in his buttonhole, and bearing also a bunch of these imperial flowers for Madame Carthame, and with the presentation confessed his own imperialistic faith and touched gloomily upon the sorry reward that it had brought him—when this event occurred, Madame Carthame's kindly feelings toward her second-floor lodger were resolved into an abiding faith and high esteem. It was upon this auspicious day that the conviction took firm root in her mind that the Count Siccatif de Courtray was the heaven-sent husband for her daughter Rose.

That Rose approved this ambitious matrimonial project of her mother's was a matter open to doubt; at least her conduct was such that two diametrically opposite views were entertained in regard to her intentions. On the one hand, Madame Carthame and the Count Siccatif de Courtray believed that she had made up her mind to live in her mother's own second-story front and be a countess. On the other hand, Jaune d'Antimoine, whose wish, perhaps, was father to his thought, believed that she would not do anything of the sort. Jaune gladly would have believed, also, that she cherished matrimonial intentions in quite a different, namely, an artistic, direction; but he was a modest young fellow, and suffered his hopes to be greatly diluted by his fears. And, in truth, the conduct of Rose was so perplexing, at times so atrociously exasperating, that a person much more deeply versed in women's ways than this young painter was, very well might have been puzzled hopelessly; for if

ever a born flirt came out of France, that flirt was Rose Carthame.

Of one thing, however, Jaune was convinced: that unless something of a positive nature was done, and done speedily, for the improvement of his outward man, his chance of success was gone forever. Already, Madame Carthame eyed his seedy garments askance; already, for Rose had admitted the truth of his suspicions in this dismal direction, Madame Carthame had instituted most unfavorable comparisons between his own chronic shabbiness and the no less chronic splendor of the Count Siccatif de Courtray. Therefore, it came to pass—out of his abstract need for presentable habiliments, out of his desire to appear in creditable form at Vandyke Brown's wedding, and, more than all else, out of his love for Rose—that Jaune d'Antimoine registered a mighty oath before high heaven that within a month's time a new suit of clothes should be his!

Yet the chances are that he would have gone down Christopher Street to the North River, and still further down, even into a watery grave—as he very frequently thought of doing during this melancholy period of his existence—had not his fortunes suddenly been irradiated by the birth in his mind of a happy thought. It came to him in this wise: He was standing drearily in front of a ready-made clothing store on Broadway, sadly contemplating a wooden figure clad in precisely the morning suit for which his soul panted, when suddenly something gave him a whack in the back. Turning sharply, and mak-

ing use of an exclamation not to be found in the French dictionaries compiled for the use of young ladies' boarding-schools, he perceived a wooden framework, from the lower end of which protruded the legs of a man. From a cleft in the upper portion of the framework came the apologetic utterance, "Didn't mean ter hit yer, boss," and then the structure moved slowly away through the throng. Over its four sides, he observed, were blazoned announcements of the excellences of the garments manufactured by the very clothing establishment in front of which he stood.

The thought came idly into his mind that this method of advertising was clumsy, and not especially effective; followed by the further thought that a much better plan would be to set agoing upon the streets a really gentlemanly-looking man, clad in the best garments that the tailoring people manufactured—while a handsome sign upon the man's back, or a silken banner proudly borne aloft, should tell where the clothes were made, and how, for two weeks only, clothes equally excellent could be bought there at a tremendous sacrifice. And then came into his mind the great thought of his life: he would disguise himself by changing his blond hair and beard to gray, and by wearing dark eye-glasses, and thus disguised he would be that man! Detection he believed to be impossible, for merely dressing himself in respectable clothes almost would suffice to prevent his recognition by even the nearest of his friends. With that prompt decision which is the sure sign of genius backed by

force of character, he paused no longer to consider. He acted. With a firm step he entered the clothing establishment; with dignity demanded a personal interview with its proprietor; with eloquence presented to that personage his scheme.

"You will understand, sare," he said, in conclusion, "that these clothes such as yours see themselves in the best way when they are carried by a man very well made, and who 'as the air *comme il faut.* I 'ave not the custom to say that I am justly that man. But now we talk of *affaires.* Look at me and see!" And so speaking, he drew himself up his full six feet, and turned slowly around. There could not be any question about it: a handsomer, a more distinguished-looking man was not to be found in all New York. With the added dignity of age, his look of distinction would be but increased.

The great head of the great tailoring establishment was visibly affected. Original devices in advertising had been the making of him. He perceived that the device now suggested to him was superior to anything that his own genius had struck out. "It's a pretty good plan," he said, meditatively. "What do you want for carrying it out?"

"For you to serve two weeks, I ask but the clothes I go to wear."

For a moment the tailor paused. In that moment the destinies of Jaune d'Antimoine, of Rose Carthame, of the Count Siccatif de Courtray, hung in the balance. It was life or death. Jaune felt his heart beating like a trip-hammer. There was upon him a feel-

ing of suffocation. The silence seemed interminable; and the longer it lasted, the more did he feel that his chances of success were oozing away, that the crisis of his life was going against him. Darkness, the darkness of desolate despair, settled down upon his soul. Mechanically he felt in his waistcoat pocket for a five-cent piece that he believed to be there—for the stillness, the restful oblivion of the North River were in his mind. His fingers clutched the coin convulsively, thankfully. At least he would not be compelled to walk down Christopher Street to his death: he could pay his way to eternity in the one-horse car. Yet even while the blackness of shattered hope seemed to be closing him in irrevocably, the glad light came again. As the voice of an angel sounded the voice of the tailor; and the words which the tailor spake were these:

"Young man, it's a bargain!"

But the tailor, upon whom Heaven had bestowed shrewdness to an extraordinary degree, perceived in the plan proposed to him higher, more artistic possibilities than had been perceived in it by its inventor. There was a dramatic instinct, an appreciation of surprise, of climax, in this man's mind that he proceeded to apply to the existing situation. With a wave of his hand he banished the suggested sign on the walking advertiser's back, and the suggested silken banner. His plan at once was simpler and more profound. Dressed in the highest style of art, Jaune was to walk Broadway daily between the hours of 11 A. M. and 2 P. M. He was to walk slowly; he was to

look searchingly in the faces of all young women of about the age of twenty years; he was to wear, over and above his garments of price, an air of confirmed melancholy. That was all.

"But of the advertisement? 'Ow ——"

"Now, never you mind about the advertisement, young man. Where that is going to come in is my business. But you can just bet your bottom dollar that I don't intend to lose any money on you. All that you have to do is just what I've told you; and to be well dressed, and walk up and down Broadway for three hours every day, and look in all the girls' faces, don't strike me as being the hardest work that you might be set at. Now come along and be measured, and day after to-morrow you shall begin."

As Jaune walked slowly homeward to his dismal studio, he meditated deeply upon the adventure before him. He did not fancy it at all; but it was the means to an end, and he was braced morally to go through with it without flinching. For the chance of winning Rose he would have stormed a battery single-handed; and not a bit more of moral courage would have been needed for such desperate work than was needed for the execution of the bloodless but soul-trying project that he had in hand. For the life and spirit of him, though, he could not see how the tailor was to get any good out of this magnificent masquerading.

In one of the evening papers, about a week later, there appeared a half-column romance that quite took Jaune d'Antimoine's breath away. It began with a reference to the distinguished elderly gentleman who,

during the past week, had been seen daily upon Broadway about the hour of noon; who gazed with such intense though respectful curiosity into every young woman's face; who, in the gay crowd, was conspicuous not less by the elegance of his dress than by his air of profound melancholy. Then briefly, but precisely, the sorrowful story of the Marquis de —— ("out of consideration for the nobleman's feelings" the name was withheld) was told: how, the son of a peer of France, he had married, while yet a minor, against the wishes of his stern father; how his young wife and infant daughter had been spirited away by the stern father's orders; how on his death-bed the father had confessed his evil deed to his son, and had told that mother and child had been banished to America, where the mother speedily had died of grief, and where the child, though in ignorance of her noble origin, had been adopted by an enormously rich American, about whom nothing more was known than the fact that he lived in New York. The Marquis, the article stated, now was engaged in searching for his long-lost daughter, and among other means to the desired end had hit upon this—of walking New York's chief thoroughfare in the faith that should he see his child his paternal instinct would reveal to him her identity.

"I calculate that this will rather whoop up public interest in our performance," said the tailor, cheerfully, the next day, as he handed the newspaper containing the pleasing fiction to Jaune. "That's my idea, for a starter. I've got the whole story ready to

come out in sections—paid a literary feller twenty dollars to get it up for me. And you be careful to-day when you are interviewed" (Jaune shuddered) "to keep the story up—or" (for Jaune was beginning a remonstrance) "you can keep out of it altogether, if you'd rather. Say you must refuse to talk upon so delicate a subject, or something of that sort. Yes, that's your card. It'll make the mystery greater, you know—and I'll see that the public gets the facts, all the same."

The tailor chuckled, and Jaune was unutterably wretched. He was on the point of throwing up his contract. He opened his mouth to speak the decisive words—and shut it again as the thought came into his mind that his misery must be borne, and borne gallantly, because it was all for the love of Rose.

That day there was no affectation in his air of melancholy. He was profoundly miserable. Faithful to his contract, he looked searchingly upon the many young women of twenty years whom he met; and such of them as were possessors of tender hearts grew very sorrowful at sight of the obvious woe by which he was oppressed. His woe, indeed, was keen, for the newspaper article had had its destined effect, and he was a marked man. People turned to look at him as people had not turned before; it was evident that he was a subject of conversation. Several times he caught broken sentences which he recognized as portions of his supposititious biography. His crowning torture was the assault of the newspaper reporters. They were suave, they were surly, they were

insinuatingly sympathetic, they were aggressively peremptory—but all alike were determined to wring from him to the uttermost the details of the sorrow that he never had suffered, of the life that he never had lived. It was a confusing sort of an experience. He began to wonder, at last, whether or not it were possible that he could be somebody else without knowing it; and if it were, in whom, precisely, his identity was vested. Being but a simple-minded young fellow, with no taste whatever for metaphysics, this line of thought was upsetting.

While involved in these perplexing doubts and the crowd at the Fifth Avenue crossing, he was so careless as to step upon the heel of a lady in front of him. And when the lady turned, half angrily, half to receive his profuse apologies, he beheld Mademoiselle Carthame. The face of this young person wore an expression made up of not less than three conflicting emotions: of resentment of the assault upon the heel of her one pair of good shoes, of friendly recognition of the familiar voice, of blank surprise upon perceiving that this voice came from the lips of a total stranger. She looked searchingly upon the smoked glasses, obviously trying to pry into the secret of the hidden eyes. Jaune's blood rushed up into his face, and he realized that detection was imminent. Mercifully, at that moment the crowd opened, and with a bow that hid his face behind his hat he made good his retreat. During the remaining half hour of his walk, he thought no more of metaphysics. The horrid danger of physical discovery from which he had escaped

so narrowly filled him with a shuddering alarm. Nor could he banish from his mind the harrowing thought that perhaps, for all his gray hair and painted wrinkles and fine clothes, Rose in truth had recognized him.

That night an irresistible attraction drew him to the Carthame abode. In the little parlor he found the severe Madame Carthame, her adorable daughter, and the offensive Count Siccatif de Courtray. Greatly to his relief, his reception was in the usual form: Madame Carthame conducted herself after the fashion of a well-bred iceberg; Rose endeavored to mitigate the severity of her parent's demeanor by her own affability; the Count, as much as possible, ignored his presence. Jaune could not repress a sigh of relief. She had not recognized him.

But his evening was one of trial. With much vivacity, Rose entertained the little company with an account of her romantic adventure with the French nobleman who had come to America in quest of his lost daughter; for she had read the newspaper story, and had identified its hero with the assailant of her heel. She dwelt with enthusiasm upon the distinguished appearance of the unhappy foreigner; she ventured the suggestion, promptly and sternly checked by her mamma, that she herself might be the lost child; she grew plaintive, and expressed a burning desire to comfort this stricken parent with a daughter's love, and, worst of all, she sat silent, with a far-away look in her charming eyes, and obviously suffered her thoughts to go astray after this hand-

some Marquis in a fashion that made even the Count Siccatif de Courtray fidget, and that filled the soul of Jaune d'Antimoine with a consuming jealousy—not the less consuming because of the absurd fact that it was jealousy of himself! As he walked home that night through the devious ways of Greenwich to his dismal studio, he seriously entertained the wish that he never had been born.

The next day all the morning papers contained elaborate "interviews" with the Marquis: for each of the several reporters who had been put on the case, believing that he alone had failed to get the facts, and being upheld by a lofty determination that no other reporter should "get a beat on him," had evolved from his own inner consciousness the story that Jaune, for the best of reasons, had refused to tell. The stories thus told, being based upon the original fiction, bore a family resemblance to each other; and as all of them were interesting, they stimulated popular curiosity in regard to their hero to a very high pitch. As the result of them, Jaune found himself the most conspicuous man in New York. During the three hours of his walk he was the centre of an interested crowd. Several benevolent persons stopped to tell him of fatherless young women with whom they were acquainted, and to urge upon him the probability that each of these young women was his long-lost child. The representatives of a dozen detective bureaus introduced themselves to him, and made offer of their professional services; a messenger from the chief of police handed him a polite note tendering the services

of the department and inviting him to a conference. It was maddening.

But worst of all were his meetings with Rose. As these multiplied, the conviction became irresistible that they were not the result of chance; indeed, her manner made doubt upon this head impossible. At first she gave him only a passing glance, then a glance somewhat longer, then a look of kindly interest, then a long look of sympathy; and at last she bestowed upon him a gentle, almost affectionate, smile that expressed, as plainly as a smile could express, her sorrow for his misery and her readiness to comfort him. In a word, Rose Carthame's conduct simply was outrageous!

The jealous anger which had inflamed Jaune's breast the night before swelled and expanded into a raging passion. He longed to engage in mortal combat this stranger who was alienating the affection that should be his. The element of absurdity in the situation no longer was apparent to him. In truth, as he reasoned, the situation was not absurd. To all intents and purposes he was two people and it was the other one of him, not himself at all, who was winning Rose's interest, perhaps her love. For a moment the thought crossed his mind that he would adjust the difficulty in his own favor by remaining this other person always. But the hard truth confronted him that every time he washed his face he would cease to be the elderly Marquis, with the harder truth that the fabulous wealth with which, as the Marquis, the newspapers had endowed him was too entirely fabulous to serve

as a basis for substantial life. And being thus cut off from hope, he fell back upon jealous hatred of himself.

That night the evening paper in which the first mention of the mysterious French nobleman had been made contained an article cleverly contrived to give point to the mystery in its commercial aspect. The fact had been observed, the article declared, that the nobleman's promenade began and ended at a prominent clothing establishment on Broadway; and then followed, in the guise of a contribution toward the clearing up of the mystery, an interview with the proprietor of the establishment in question. However, the interview left the mystery just where it found it, for all that the tailor told was that the Marquis had bought several suits of clothes from him; that he had shown himself to be an exceptionally critical person in the matter of his wearing apparel; that he had expressed repeatedly his entire satisfaction with his purchases. In another portion of the paper was a glaring advertisement, in which the clothing man set forth, in an animated fashion, the cheapness and desirability of "The Marquis Suit"—a suit that "might be seen to advantage on the person of the afflicted French nobleman now in our midst who had honored it with his approval, and in whose honor it had been named." Upon reading the newspaper narrative and its advertisement pendant, Jaune groaned aloud. He was oppressed by a horror of discovery, and here, as it seemed to him in his morbidly nervous condition, was a clew to his duplex identity sufficiently obvious to be apparent even to a detective.

The Count Siccatif de Courtray, as has been intimated, went so far as to fidget while listening to Mademoiselle Carthame's vivacious description of her encounter with the handsome Marquis. Being regaled during the ensuing evening with a very similar narrative—a materially modified version of the events which had aroused in so lively a manner the passion of jealousy in the breast of Jaune d'Antimoine—the Count ceased merely to fidget and became the prey to a serious anxiety. He determined that the next day, quite unobtrusively, he would observe Mademoiselle Carthame in her relations with this unknown but dangerously fascinating nobleman; and also that he would give some attention to the nobleman himself. This secondary purpose was strengthened the next morning, while the Count was engaged with his coffee and newspaper, by his finding in the "Courrier des Etats-Unis" a translation of the paragraph stating the curious fact that the daily walk of the Marquis began and ended at the Broadway tailor shop.

Having finished his breakfast, the Count leisurely betook himself to Broadway. As he slowly strolled eastward, he observed on the other side of the street Jaune d'Antimoine, in his desperately shabby raiment, hurriedly walking eastward also. The Count murmured a brief panegyric upon M. d'Antimoine, in which the words "cet animal" alone were distinguishable. They were near Broadway at this moment, and to the Count's surprise M. d'Antimoine entered the clothing establishment from which the Marquis departed upon his daily walk. Could it be possible, he thought,

that fortune had smiled upon the young artist, and that he was about to purchase a new suit of clothes? The Count entertained the charitable hope that such could not be the case.

It was the Count's purpose, in order that he might follow also the movements of Mademoiselle Carthame, to follow the Marquis from the beginning to the end of his promenade. He set himself, therefore, to watching closely for the appearance of the grief-stricken foreigner, moving carelessly the while from one shop-window to another that commanded a view of the field. At the end of half an hour, when the Count was beginning to think that the object of his solicitude was a myth, out from the broad portal of the clothing establishment came the Marquis in all his glory—more glorious, in truth, than Solomon, and more melancholy than the melancholy Jaques. And yet for an instant the Count Siccatif de Courtray was possessed by the absurd fancy that this stately personage was Jaune d'Antimoine! Truly, here was the same tall, handsome figure, the same easy, elegant carriage, the same cut of hair and beard. But the resemblance went no further, for beard and hair were gray almost to whiteness, the face was pale and old, and the clothes, so far from being desperately seedy, were more resplendent even than the Count's own. No, the thought was incredible, preposterous, and yet the Count could not discharge it from his mind. He stamped his foot savagely; this mystery was becoming more interesting than pleasing.

In the crowd that the Marquis drew in his wake, as

he slowly, sadly sauntered up Broadway, the Count had no difficulty in following him unobserved. The situation was that of the previous day, only it was intensified, and therefore, to its hero, the more horrible. The benevolent people with stray fatherless young women to dispose of were out in greater force; the detectives were more aggressive; the newspaper people were more persistent; the general public was more keenly interested in the whole performance. And Rose —most dreadful of all—was more outrageous than ever! The Count grew almost green with rage during the three hours that he was a witness of this young woman's scandalous conduct. A dozen times she met the Marquis in the course of his walk, and each time that she met him she greeted him with a yet more tender smile. A curious fact that at first surprised, then puzzled, then comforted the Count was the very obvious annoyance which these flattering attentions caused their recipient. Evidently, he persistently endeavored to evade the meetings which Rose as persistently and more successfully endeavored to force upon him. Within the scope of M. de Courtary's comprehension only one reason seemed to be sufficient to explain the determination on the part of the Marquis to resist the advances of a singularly attractive young woman, whose good disposition toward him was so conspicuously, though so irregularly, manifested: a fear of recognition. And this reason adjusted itself in a striking manner to the queer notion that had come into his mind that the Marquis was an ideal creation whose reality was Jeaune d'Antimoine. The

thought was absurd, irrational, but it grew stronger and stronger within him—and became an assured conviction when, shortly after the promenade of the Marquis had ended, Jaune came forth from the clothing store in his normal condition of shabbiness and youth. The Count was not in all respects a praiseworthy person, but among his vices was not that of stupidity. Without any very tremendous mental effort he grasped the fact that his rival had sold himself into bondage as a walking advertisement, and, knowing this, a righteous exultation filled his soul. Jaune's destiny, so far as Mademoiselle Carthame was concerned, he felt was in his power: and he was perplexed by no nice doubts as to the purpose to which the power that he had gained should be applied.

Untroubled by the knowledge that his secret was discovered, Jaune entered upon the last day of his martyrdom. It was the most agonizing day of all. The benevolent persons, the reporters, the detectives, the crowd surging about him, drove him almost to madness. He walked as one dazed. And above and over all he was possessed by a frenzy of jealousy that came of the offensively friendly smiles which Rose bestowed upon him as she forced meetings upon him again and again. It was with difficulty that he restrained himself from laying violent hands upon this bogus Marquis who falsely and infamously had beguiled away from him the love for which he gladly would have given his life. Only the blood of his despicable rival, he felt, would satisfy him. He longed to find himself with a sword in his hand on a bit of

smooth turf, and the villanous Marquis over against him, ready to be run through. The thought was so delightful, so animating, that involuntarily he made a lunge—and had to apologize confusedly to an elderly gentleman whom he had poked in the back with his umbrella.

At last the three hours of torture, the last of his two weeks of hateful servitude, came to an end. Pale beneath his false paleness, haggard beyond his false haggardness of age, he entered the clothing store and once more was himself. With a gladness unspeakable he washed off his wrinkles and washed out the gray from his hair and beard; with a sense of infinite satisfaction that, a fortnight earlier, he would not have believed possible, he resumed his shabby old clothes. Had he chosen to do so, he might have walked away in the new and magnificent apparel which he now fairly had earned; but just at present his loathing for these fine garments was beyond all words.

The tailor fain would have had the masquerade continue longer, for, as he frankly stated, "The Marquis Suit" was having a tremendous sale. But Jaune was deaf not only to the tailor's blandishments, but to his offers of substantial cash. "Not for the millions would I be in this part of the Marquis for one day yet more," he said firmly. And he added, "I trust to you in honor, sare, that not never shall my name be spoken in this affair."

"Couldn't speak it if I wanted to, my dear boy. It's a mystery to me how you're able to say it yourself! Well, I'd like you to run the 'Marquis' for an-

other week; but if you won't, you won't, I suppose, so there's an end of it. I'm sorry you haven't enjoyed it. I have. It's been as good a thing as I ever got hold of. Now give me your address and I'll have your clothes sent to you. Don't you want some more? I don't mind letting you have a regular outfit if you want it. One good turn, you know—and you've done me a good turn, and that's a fact."

But Jaune declined this liberal offer, and declined also to leave his address, which would have involved a revelation of his name. It was a comfort to him to know that his name was safe—a great comfort. So the garments of the forever departed Marquis were put up in a big bundle, and Jaune journeyed homeward to his studio in Greenwich—bearing his sheaves with him—in a Bleecker Street car.

"Well, you are a cheeky beggar, d'Antimoine," said Vandyke Brown, cheerfully, the next morning, as he came into Jaune's studio with a newspaper in his hand. "So you are the Marquis who has been setting the town wild for the last week, eh? And whom did you bet with? And what started you in such a crazy performance, anyway? Tell me all about it. It's as funny—Good heavens! d'Antimoine, what's the matter? Are you ill?" For Jaune had grown deathly pale and was gasping.

"I do not know of what it is that you talk," he answered, with a great effort.

"Oh, come now, that's too thin, you know. Why, here's a whole column about it, telling how you made a bet with somebody that you could set all the town

to talking about you, and yet do it all in such a clever disguise that nobody would know who you really were, not even your most intimate friends. And I should say that you had won handsomely. Why, I've seen you on Broadway a dozen times myself this last week, and I never had the remotest suspicion that the Marquis was you. I must say, though," continued Brown, reflectively, and looking closely at Jaune, "that it was stupid of me. I did think that you had a familiar sort of look; and once, I remember, it did occur to me that you looked astonishingly like yourself. It—it was the clothes, you see, that threw me out. Where ever did you get such a stunning rig? I don't believe that I'd have known you dressed like that, even if you hadn't been gray and wrinkled. But tell me all about it, old man. It must have been jolly fun!"

"Fun!" groaned Jaune; "it was the despair!" And then, his heart being very full and his longing for sympathy overpowering, Jaune told Brown the whole story. "But what is this of one bet, my dear Van," he concluded, "I do not of the least know."

"Well, here it all is in the paper, anyway. Calls you 'a distinguished animal-painter,' and alludes to your 'strikingly vigorous "Lioness and Cubs" and powerful "Dray Horses" at the last spring exhibition of the Society of American Artists.' Must be somebody who knows you, you see, and somebody who means well by you, too. There's nothing at all about your being an advertisement; indeed, there's nothing in the story but a good joke, of which you are the

hero. It's an eccentric sort of heroism, to be sure; but then, for some unknown reason, people never seem to believe that artists are rational human beings, so your eccentricity will do you no harm. And it's no end of an advertisement for you. Whoever wrote it meant well by you. And, by Jove! I know who it is! It's little Conté Crayon. He's a good-hearted little beggar, and he likes you ever so much, for I've heard him say so; but how he ever got hold of the story, and especially of such a jolly version of it, I don't see."

At this moment, by a pleasing coincidence, Conté Crayon himself appeared with the desired explanation. "You see," he said, "that beast of a Siccatif de Courtray hunted me up yesterday and told me the yarn about you and the slop-shop man. He wanted me to write it up and publish it, 'as a joke,' he said; but it was clear enough that he was in ugly earnest about it. And so, you see, I had to rush it into print in the way I chose to tell it—which won't do you a bit of harm, d'Antimoine—in order to head him off. The blackguard meant to get you into a mess, and if I'd hung fire he'd have told somebody else about it, and had the real story published. Of course, you know, there's nothing in the real story that you need be ashamed of; but if it had been told, you certainly would have been laughed at, and nasty people would have said nasty things about it. And as there wasn't any time to lose, I had to print it first and then come here and explain matters afterward. And what I've got to say is this: Just you cheek it out and say that

it *was* a bet, and that you won it! Brown and I will back you up in it, and so will the slop-shop man. I've been to see him this morning, and he is so pleased with the way that 'The Marquis Suit' is selling, and with the extra free advertisement that he has got out of my article, that he's promised to adopt the bet version in his advertisement in all the papers. He is going to advertise that The Marquis Suit is so called because everybody who wears it looks like a marquis—just as you did. This cuts the ground right from under the Count's feet, you see; for nobody'd believe him on his oath if they could help it.

"And now I must clear out. I've got a race at Jerome Park at two o'clock. It's all right, d'Antimoine; I assure you it's all right—but I should advise you to punch the Count's head, all the same."

Vandyke Brown thought it was all right, too, as he talked the matter over with Jaune after little Conté Crayon had gone. But Jaune refused to be comforted. So far as the public was concerned he admitted that Conté Crayon's story had saved him, but he was oppressed by a great dread of what might be the effect of the truth upon Rose. For Juane d'Antimoine was too honest a gentleman even to think of deceiving his mistress. He must tell her the whole story, without reserve, and as she approved or disapproved of what he had done must his hopes of happiness live or die.

"Better have it out with her to-day, and be done with it," counseled Brown.

"Ah! it is well for you to speak of a 'urry, my good

Van; but it is not you who go to execute your life. No, I 'ave not the force to go to-day. To-day I go to make a long walk. Then this night I sleep well. To-morrow, in the morning, do I go to affront my destiny." And from this resolution Jaune was not to be moved.

Yet it was an unfortunate resolution, for it gave the Count Siccatif de Courtray time and opportunity for a flank movement. In the Count's breast rage and astonishment contended for the mastery as he contemplated the curious miscarriage of his newspaper assault. He had chosen this line of attack partly because his modesty counseled him to keep his own personality in the background, partly because the wider the publicity of his rival's disgrace the more complete would that disgrace be. But as his newspaper ally failed him, he took the campaign into his own hands; that is to say, he hurried to tell the true story, and a good deal more than the true story, to Rose and Madame Carthame.

Concerning its effect upon Rose, he was in doubt; but its effect upon Madame Carthame was all that he could desire. This severe person instantly took the cue that the Count dexterously gave her by affecting to palliate Jaune's erratic conduct. He urged that, inasmuch as M. d'Antimoine was a conspicuous failure as an artist, for him to engage himself to a tailor as a walking advertisement, so far from being a disgrace to him, was greatly to his credit. And Madame Carthame promptly and vehemently asserted that it wasn't. She refused to regard what he had done in

any other light than that of a crime. She declared that never again should his offensive form darken her door. Solemnly she forbade Rose from recognizing him when in the future they should chance to meet. And then she abated her severity to the extent of thanking the Count with tears in her eyes for the service that he had done her in tearing off this viper's disguise. Naturally, the Count was charmed by Madame Carthame's energetic indignation. He perceived that his unselfish investigations of the actions of Monsieur Jaune were bearing excellent fruit. Already, as he believed, the way toward his own happiness was smooth and clear. As the Count retired from this successful conference, he laughed softly to himself: nor did he pause in his unobtrusive mirth to reflect that those laugh best who laugh last.

And thus it came to pass that when Jaune, refreshed by sound slumber and a little cheered by hope, presented himself the next morning at Madame Carthame's gates, fate decreed that Rose herself should open the gates to him—in response to his ring—and in her own proper person should tell him that she was not at home. In explanation of this obviously inexact statement she announced to him her mother's stern decree. Being but a giddy young person, however, and one somewhat lacking in fit reverence of maternal authority, she added, on her own account, that in half an hour or so she was going up Fourth Street to the Gansevoort market, and that Fourth Street was a public thoroughfare, upon which M. d'Antimoine also had a perfect right to walk.

In the course of this walk, while Jaune gallantly carried the market-basket, the story that Rose already had heard from the Count Siccatif de Courtray was told again—but told with a very different coloring. For Mademoiselle Carthame clearly perceived how great the sacrifice had been that Jaune had made for her sake, and how bravely, because it was for her sake, it had been made. There was real pathos in his voice; once or twice he nearly broke down. Possibly it was because she did not wish him to see her eyes that she manifested so marked an interest in the shop windows as they walked along.

"And so that adorable Marquis was unreal?" queried Mademoiselle Carthame sadly, and somewhat irrelevantly, when Jaune had told her all.

"He was not adorable. He was a disgusting beast!" replied M. d'Antimoine savagely.

"I—I loved him!" answered Rose, turning upon Jaune, at last, her black eyes. They did not sparkle, as was their wont, but they were wonderfully lustrous and soft.

Jaune looked down into the market-basket and groaned.

"And—and I love him still. I think, I—I hope, that he will live always in my heart."

The voice of Mademoiselle Carthame trembled, and her hand grasped very tightly the bag of carrots that they had been unable to make a place for in the basket: they were coming back from the market now.

Jaune did not look up. For the life of him he could not keep back a sob. It was bitter hard, he felt, that

out of his love for Rose should come love's wreck; and harder yet that the rival who had stolen her from him should be himself! Through the mist of his misery he seemed to hear Rose laughing softly. Could this be so? Then, indeed, was the capstone set upon his grief!

"Jaune!"

He started, and so violently that a cabbage, with half a dozen potatoes after it, sprang out of the basket and rolled along the pavement at her feet. His bowed head rose with a jerk, and their eyes met full. In hers there was a look half mocking, that as he gazed changed into tenderness; into his, as he saw the change and perceived its meaning, there came a look of glad delight.

"As though you could deceive *me!* Why, of course, I knew you from the very first!"

Then they collected the potatoes and the cabbage and walked slowly on, and great happiness was in their hearts.

The world was a brighter world for Jaune d'Antimoine when he gave into Rose's hand the market-basket on her own doorstep, and turned reluctantly away. But there still were clouds in it. Rose had admitted that two things were necessary before getting married could be thought of at all seriously: something must be done by which the nose of the Count Siccatif de Courtray would be disjointed; something must be done to assure Madame Carthame that M. d'Antimoine, in some fashion at least a little removed from semi-starvation, could maintain a wife.

It was certain that until these things were accomplished Madame Carthame's lofty resolution to transform her daughter into a countess, and her stern disapprobation of Jaune as a social outcast, never would be overcome.

As events turned out, it was the second of these requirements that was fulfilled first.

Mr. Badger Brush was a very rich sporting man, whose tastes were horsey, but whose heart was in the right place. It was his delight to make or to back extraordinary wagers. Few New Yorkers have forgotten that very queer bet of his that resulted in putting high hats on all the Broadway telegraph poles. When Mr. Brush read the story of Jaune d'Antimoine's wager, therefore, he was greatly pleased with its originality; and when, later in the day, he fell in with little Conté Crayon at Jerome Park, he pressed that ingenious young newspaper man for additional particulars. And knowing the whereabouts of Mr. Badger Brush's heart, Conté Crayon did not hesitate to tell the whole story—winding up with the pointed suggestion that inasmuch as the hero of the story was an animal-painter of decided, though as yet unrecognized, ability, Mr. Brush could not do better than manifest his interest in a practical way by giving him an order. The sporting man rose to the suggestion with a commendable promptness and warmth.

"I don't care a blank if it wasn't a bet," he said, heartily. "That young man has pluck, and he deserves to be encouraged. I'll go down and see him

to-morrow, and I'll order a portrait of Celeripes; a life-size, thousand-dollar portrait, by Jove! Celeripes deserves it, after the pot of money he brought me at Long Branch, and your friend deserves it too. And I have some other horses that I want painted, and some dogs—he paints dogs, I suppose? And I know a lot of other fellows who ought to have their horses painted, and I'll start them along at him. I'll give him all the painting he can handle in the next ten years. For it *was* a bet, you see, after all. Didn't he back his cleverness in disguise against the wits of the whole town? And didn't the slop-shop man put up the stakes? And didn't he just win in a canter? I should rather think he did! Of course it was a bet, and a mighty good one at that. Gad! Crayon, it's the best thing that's been done in New York for years. It's what I call first-class cheek. I couldn't have done it better, sir, myself!"

Thus it fell out that half an hour after Jaune got back to his studio from that memorable walk to the Gansevoort market, he had the breath-taking-away felicity of booking a thousand-dollar order, and of receiving such obviously trustworthy assurances of many more orders that his wildest hopes of success in a moment were resolved into substantial realities. When he was alone again he certainly would have believed that he had been dreaming but for the fact that Mr. Badger Brush had insisted upon paying half the price of the picture down in advance; for whatever this good-hearted, horsey gentleman did, he did thoroughly well. The crisp notes, more than Jaune ever

had seen together in all his life before—save once, when he took a dealer's check for ten dollars to a bank and looked through the wire screen while the bank man haughtily cashed it—lay on the table where Mr. Badger Brush had left them; and their blissful presence proved that his happiness was not a dream, but real.

From the corner into which, loathingly, he had kicked it, he drew forth the bundle containing "The Marquis Suit." With a certain solemnity he resumed these garments of price in which he had suffered so much torture, and, being clad, boldly presented himself to Madame Carthame with a formal demand for her daughter's hand. And in view of the sudden and prodigious change that had come over M. d'Antimoine's fortunes, almost was Madame Carthame persuaded that the matrimonial plans which she had laid out for her daughter might be changed. Yet did she hesitate before announcing that their Median and Persian quality might be questioned: for the hope that Rose might be a countess lay very close to Madame Carthame's heart. However, her determination was shaken, which was a great point gained.

And presently—for Jaune's star was triumphantly in the ascendant—it was completely destroyed. The instrument of its destruction was Mr. Badger Brush's groom, Stumps.

Stumps was a talkative creature, and whenever he came down to Jaune's studio, as he very often did while the portrait of Celeripes was in progress, he had a good deal to say over and above the message that

he brought, as to when the horse would be free for the next "sitting" in the paddock at Mr. Brush's country place, where Jaune was painting him. And Jaune, who was one of the best-natured of mortals, usually suffered Stumps to talk away until he was tired.

"You might knock me down with a wisp of hay, you might, indeed, sir," said the groom one morning a fortnight after the picture had been begun—the day but one, in fact, before that set for Vandyke Brown's wedding. "Yes, sir," he continued, "with a wisp of hay, or even with a single straw! Here I've been face to face with my own father's brother's son, and I've put out my hand to him, and he's turned away short and pretended as he didn't know me and went off! And they tells me at his lodgin', for I follered him a-purpose to find him out, that he calls hisself a Frenchman, and says as how his name—which it is Stumps, and always has been—is Count Sikativ de Cortray!"

Jaune's palette and brushes fell to the floor with a crash. "Is it posseeble that you do tell me of the Comte Siccatif de Courtray? Are you then sure that you do not make one grand meestake? Is it 'im truly that you 'ave seen?"

"Him, sir? Why, in course it's him. Haven't I knowed him ever since he wasn't higher'n a hoss's fetlock? Don't I tell you as me and him's fust cousins? Him? In course it's him—the gump!"

"Then, my good Stump, you will now tell me of this wonder all."

It's not much there is to tell, sir, and wat there is

isn't to his credit. His father was my father's brother. My father was in the hoss line out Saint John's Wood way—in Lunnon, you know, sir—and his father lived in our street and was a swell barber. Uncle'd married a French young 'ooman as was dressmakin' and had been a lady's maid; it's along of his mother that he gets his Frenchness, you see. He was an only son, he was, and they made a lot of him—dressin' him fine, and coddlin' him, and sendin' him to school like anythink. Uncle was doin' a big trade, you see, and makin' money fast. Then, when he was a young fellow of twenty or so, and after he'd served at barberin' with his father for a couple of years, he took service with young Lord Cadmium—as had his 'cousin' livin' in a willa down our way and came to uncle's to be barbered frequent. And wen Lord Cadmium went sudden-like over to the Continent, wishin' to give his 'cousin' the slip, havin' got sick of her, Stumps he went along. That's a matter of ten years ago, sir, and blessed if I've laid eyes on him since until I seed him here in New York to-day. Uncle died better'n two year back, aunt havin' died fust, and he left a tidy pot of money to Stumps; and I did hear that Stumps, who'd been barberin' in Paris, had giv' up work when he got the cash and had set up to be a gentleman, but I didn't know as he'd set up to be a count too. The like of this I never did see!"

"And you are then sure, you will swear, my good Stump, that this are the same man?"

"Swear, sir! I'll swear to it 'igh and low and all day long! But I must be goin', sir. You will please

to remember that the hoss will be ready for you at ten o'clock to-morrow mornin', sharp."

Jaune rushed down to Vandyke Brown's studio for counsel as to whether he should go at once to the Count's lodgings and charge him with fraud to his face, or should make the charge first to Madame Carthame. But Brown was out. Nor was he in old Madder's studio, though about this time he was much more likely to be there than in his own. Old Madder said that Brown had taken Rose over to Brooklyn, to the Philharmonic, and he believed that they were going to dinner at Mr. Mangan Brown's afterward, and would not be in till late; and he seemed to be pretty grumpy about it.

Jaune fumed and fretted away what was left of the afternoon and a good part of the evening. At last Brown and Rose came home, and Brown, with a very bad grace, suffered himself to be led away from old Madder's threshold. To do him justice, though, when he had heard the story that Jaune had to tell, he was all eagerness. His advice was to make the attack instantly; and without more words they set off together, walking briskly through the chill air of the late October night.

As they were passing along Macdougal Street—midway between Bleecker and Houston, in front of the row of pretty houses with verandas all over their fronts —Jaune suddenly gripped Brown's arm and drew him quickly within one of the little front yards and into the shadow of the high iron steps.

"Look!" he said.

On the other side of the street, in the light of the gas-lamp that stands in the centre of the block, was the Count himself. For the moment that he was beneath the gas-lamp they saw him clearly. His face was set in an expression of gloomy sternness; his rapid, resolute walk indicated a definite purpose; he carried a little bundle in his hand.

"What a villain he looks!" whispered Brown. "Upon my soul, I do believe that he is going to murder somebody!"

"Ah, the vile animal! We will pursue," answered Jaune, also in a whisper.

Giving the Count a start of a dozen house fronts, they stepped out from their retreat and followed him cautiously. He walked quickly up Macdougal Street until he came out on Washington Square. For a moment he paused—by Sam Wah's laundry—and then turned sharply to the left along Fourth Street. At a good pace he crossed Sixth Avenue, swung around the curve that Fourth Street makes before beginning its preposterous journey northward, went on past the three little balconied houses whose fronts are on Washington Place, and so came out upon the open space where Washington Place and Barrow Street and Fourth Street all run into each other. It was hereabout that Wouter Van Twiller had his tobacco farm a trifle less than two centuries ago.

The Count stopped, as though to get his bearings. and while they waited for him to go on Brown nudged Jaune to look at the delightfully picturesque frame house, set in a deep niche between two high brick

houses, with the wooden stair elbowing up its outside to its third story. It came out wonderfully well in the moonlight, but Jaune was too much excited even to glance at it.

At the next group of corners—where Fourth Street crosses Grove and Christopher Streets at the point where they go sidling into each other along the slanting lines of the little park—the Count halted again. Evidently, the exceeding crookedness of Greenwich Village puzzled him—as well it might. Presently a Christopher Street car came along and set him straight; and thus guided, he started resolutely westward, as though heading for the river.

"Is it posseeble that he goes 'imself to drown?" suggested d'Antimoine.

"No such good luck," Brown answered shortly.

Coming out on what used to be called "the Strand" —West Street they call it now—the Count bore away from the lights of the Hoboken Ferry and from the guarded docks of the White Star and Anchor lines of steamers, skirted the fleet of oyster boats, and so came to the quiet pier at the foot of Perry Street, where the hay barges unload. This pier runs a long way out into the river, for it is a part of what was called Sapokamikke Point in Indian times. The Count stopped and looked cautiously around him, but his pursuers promptly crouched behind a dray and became invisible.

As he went out upon the pier, though, they were close upon his heels—walking noiselessly over the loose hay and keeping themselves hidden in the shadow of the barges and behind the piles of bales. At the very

end of the pier he stopped. Jaune and Brown, hidden by a bale of hay, were within five feet of him. Their hearts were beating tremendously. There had been no tragical purpose in their minds when they started, but it certainly did look now as though they were in the thick of a tragedy. In the crisp October moonlight the Count's face shone deathly pale; they could see the fingers of his right hand working convulsively; they could hear his labored breathing. Below him was the deep, black water, lapping and rippling as the swirl of the tide sucked it into the dark, slimy recesses among the piles. In its bosom was horrible death. The Count stepped out upon the very edge of the pier and gazed wofully down upon the swelling waters. His dismal purpose no longer admitted of doubt. Involuntarily the two followed him until they were close at his back. Little as they loved him, they could not suffer him thus despairingly to leave the world.

But instead of casting himself over the edge of the pier, the Count slowly raised the hand that held the bundle, with the obvious intention of throwing the bundle and whatever was the evil secret that it contained into the river's depths. Quick as thought, Brown had seized the upraised arm, and Jaune had settled upon the other arm with a grip like a vise.

"No, you don't, my boy! Let's see what it is before it goes overboard. Hold fast, d'Antimoine!"

The Count struggled furiously, but hopelessly.

"It's no use. You may as well give in, Stumps!"

As Brown uttered this name the Count suddenly

became limp. The little bundle that he had clutched tightly through the struggle dropped from his nerveless hand, and fell open as it struck the ground. And there, gleaming in the moonlight, a brace of razors, a stubby brush, a stout pair of shears, lay loosely in the folds of a barber's jacket!

And this was the sorry climax to the brilliant romance of the proscribed Bonapartist, the Count Siccatif de Courtray!

Jaune, who was a generous-hearted young fellow, was for setting free his crestfallen rival at once, and so having done with him. Brown took a more statesmanlike view of the situation. "We will let him go after he has owned up to Madame Carthame what a fraud he is," he said. The Count winced when this sentence was pronounced, but he uttered no remonstrance. The shock of the discovery had completely demoralized him.

It was after midnight when they reached Madame Carthame's dwelling, and Rose herself, with her hair done up in curl papers, opened the door for them. When she recognized the three visitors and perceived that the Count was in custody, and at the same moment remembered her curl papers, on her face the gaze of astonishment and the blush of maidenly modesty contended for the right of way.

Madame Carthame fairly was in bed—as was evident from the spirited conversation between herself and her vivacious daughter that was perfectly audible through the folding doors which separated the little parlor from her bedroom. It was evident, also, that she was in-

disposed to rise. However, her indisposition was overcome and in the course of twenty minutes or so she appeared arrayed in a frigid dignity and a loose wrapper. Rose, meanwhile, had taken off her curl papers, and Jaune regarded her tumbled hair with ecstasy.

The tribunal being assembled, the prisoner was placed at the bar and the trial began. It was an eminently irregular trial, looking at it from a legal point of view, for the verbal evidence all was hearsay. But it also was extra-legal in that it was brief and decisive. Brown gave his testimony in the shape of a repetition of the story that Jaune had told him had been told by Mr. Badger Brush's groom; and when this was concluded, Jaune produced the jacket, razors, shears, and shaving brush, and stated the circumstances under which they had been found. Then the prosecution rested.

Being questioned by the court—that is to say, by Madame Carthame—in his own defence, the Count replied gloomily that he hadn't any. "When I saw that horse fellow," he said, "I knew that I was likely to get into trouble, and that was the reason why I wanted to get rid of these things. And now the game is up. It is all true. I was a barber. I am not a count. My real name is Stumps."

Then it was that Madame Carthame, blissfully ignorant of the fact that she had neglected to remove her nightcap, stood up in her place, with her wrapper gathered about her in a statuesque fashion, and in a tragic tone uttered the single word:

"Sortez!"

And the Count went!

Out, out into the chill and gloom of night went the false Count, never to return; and with him went Madame Carthame's fond hope that her daughter would be a countess, which also was the last barrier in the way of Jaune d'Antimoine's love. Perceiving that the force of fate inexorably was pressing upon her, Madame Carthame—still in her night-cap—bestowed upon Rose and Jaune the maternal blessing in a manner that, even allowing for the nightcap, was both stately and severe.

As at Vandyke Brown's wedding Jaune d'Antimoine was radiantly magnificent in "The Marquis Suit," adding splendor to the ceremony and rendering himself most pleasing in the eyes of Rose Carthame; so, a month later, he was yet more radiant when he wore the famous suit again, in the church of Saint Vincent de Paul, and was himself married.

Conté Crayon brought Mr. Badger Brush down to the wedding, and the groom came too, and the tailor got wind of it and came without being asked—and had to be implored not to work it up into an advertisement, as he very much wanted to do. Mrs. Vandyke Brown, just home from her wedding journey, was the first—after the kiss of Madame Carthame had been sternly bestowed—to kiss the bride; and Mr. Badger Brush irreverently whispered to Conté Crayon that he wished, by gad! he had her chance!

OLE 'STRACTED

BY THOMAS NELSON PAGE

Thomas Nelson Page (born in Oakland, Virginia, April 23, 1853) represents the generation of Southerners who were too young to fight but not to feel during the Civil War. In the middle eighties he published a number of stories in the "Century Magazine" which presented with loving sympathy charming views of the old aristocratic régime that it had become a literary fashion sweepingly to condemn. These tales of courtly ideals on the part of the masters, and affecting loyalty on the side of the slaves, were gathered together and published in 1887 in a volume entitled "In Ole Virginia." "Marse Chan," "Meh Lady," and "Ole 'Stracted," the present selection, are the favorites of the collection.

OLE 'STRACTED

BY THOMAS NELSON PAGE

"AWE, little Ephum! *awe,* little E-phum! ef you don' come 'long heah, boy, an' rock dis chile, I'll buss you haid open!" screamed the high-pitched voice of a woman, breaking the stillness of the summer evening. She had just come to the door of the little cabin, where she was now standing, anxiously scanning the space before her, while a baby's plaintive wail rose and fell within with wearying monotony. The log cabin, set in a gall in the middle of an old field all grown up in sassafras, was not a very inviting-looking place; a few hens loitering about the new hen-house, a brood of half-grown chickens picking in the grass and watching the door, and a runty pig tied to a "stob," were the only signs of thrift; yet the face of the woman cleared up as she gazed about her and afar off, where the gleam of green made a pleasant spot, where the corn grew in the river bottom; for it was her home, and the best of all was she thought it belonged to them.

A rumble of distant thunder caught her ear, and she stepped down and took a well-worn garment from the clothes-line, stretched between two dogwood forks, and having, after a keen glance down the path through the bushes, satisfied herself that no one was in sight,

This story is reprinted, by permission, from the book entitled "In Ole Virginia," Copyright, 1887, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

she returned to the house, and the baby's voice rose louder than before. The mother, as she set out her ironing table, raised a dirge-like hymn, which she chanted, partly from habit and partly in self-defence. She ironed carefully the ragged shirt she had just taken from the line, and then, after some search, finding a needle and cotton, she drew a chair to the door and proceeded to mend the garment.

"Dis de on'ies' shut Ole 'Stracted got," she said, as if in apology to herself for being so careful.

The cloud slowly gathered over the pines in the direction of the path; the fowls carefully tripped up the path, and after a prudent pause at the hole, disappeared one by one within; the chickens picked in a gradually contracting circuit, and finally one or two stole furtively to the cabin door, and after a brief reconnaissance came in, and fluttered up the ladder to the loft, where they had been born, and yet roosted. Once more the baby's voice prevailed, and once more the woman went to the door, and, looking down the path, screamed, "Awe, little Ephum! awe, little Ephum!"

"Ma'm," came the not very distant answer from the bushes.

"Why 'n't you come 'long heah, boy, an' rock dis chile?"

"Yes'm, I comin'," came the answer. She waited, watching, until there emerged from the bushes a queer little caravan, headed by a small brat, who staggered under the weight of another apparently nearly as large and quite as black as himself, while several more of

various degrees of diminutiveness struggled along behind.

"Ain't you heah me callin' you, boy? You better come when I call you. I'll tyah you all to pieces!" pursued the woman, in the angriest of keys, her countenance, however, appearing unruffled. The head of the caravan stooped and deposited his burden carefully on the ground; then, with a comical look of mingled alarm and penitence, he slowly approached the door, keeping his eye watchfully on his mother, and, picking his opportunity, slipped in past her, dodging skilfully just enough to escape a blow which she aimed at him, and which would have "slapped him flat" had it struck him, but which, in truth, was intended merely to warn and keep him in wholesome fear, and was purposely aimed high enough to miss him, allowing for the certain dodge.

The culprit, having stifled the whimper with which he was prepared, flung himself on to the foot of the rough plank cradle, and began to rock it violently and noisily, using one leg as a lever, and singing an accompaniment, of which the only words that rose above the noise of the rockers were "By-a-by, don't you cry; go to sleep, little baby"; and sure enough the baby stopped crying and went to sleep.

Eph watched his mammy furtively as she scraped away the ashes and laid the thick pone of dough on the hearth, and shoveled the hot ashes upon it. Supper would be ready directly, and it was time to propitiate her. He bethought himself of a message.

"Mammy, Ole 'Stracted say you must bring he shut; he say he marster comin' to-night."

"How he say he is?" inquired the woman, with some interest.

"He ain' say—jes say he want he shut. He sutny is comical—he layin' down in de baid." Then, having relieved his mind, Eph went to sleep in the cradle.

" 'Layin' down in de baid?' " quoted the woman to herself as she moved about the room. "I 'ain' nuver hern 'bout dat befo'. Dat sutny is a comical ole man anyways. He say he used to live on dis plantation, an' yit he al'ays talkin' 'bout de gret house an' de fine kerridges dee used to have, an' 'bout he marster comin' to buy him back. De 'ain' nuver been no gret house on dis place, not sence I know nuttin 'bout it, 'sep de overseer house whar dat man live. I heah Ephum say Aunt Dinah tell him de ole house whar used to be on de hill whar dat gret oak-tree is in de pines bu'nt down de year he wuz born, an' he ole marster had to live in de overseer house, an' hit break he heart, an' dee teck all he niggers, an' dat's de way *he* come to blongst to we all; but dat ole man ain' know nuttin 'bout dat house, 'cause hit bu'nt down. I wonder whar he did come from?" she pursued, "an' what he sho' 'nough name? He sholy couldn' been named 'Ole 'Stracted,' jes so; dat ain' no name 'tall. Yit ef he ain' 'stracted, 'tain' nobody is. He ain' even know he own name," she continued, presently. "Say he marster'll know him when he come—ain' know de folks is free; say he marster gwi buy him back in de summer an' kyar him home, an' 'bout de money he gwine gi' him. Ef he

got any money, I wonder he live down dyah in dat evil-sperit hole." And the woman glanced around with great complacency on the picture-pasted walls of her own by no means sumptuously furnished house. "Money!" she repeated aloud, as she began to rake in the ashes, "He ain' got nuttin. I got to kyar him piece o' dis bread now," and she went off into a dream of what they would do when the big crop on their land should be all in, and the last payment made on the house; of what she would wear, and how she would dress the children, and the appearance she would make at meeting, not reflecting that the sum they had paid for the property had never, even with all their stinting, amounted in any one year to more than a few dollars over the rent charged for the place, and that the eight hundred dollars yet due on it was more than they could make at the present rate in a lifetime.

"Ef Ephum jes had a mule, or even somebody to help him," she thought, "but he ain' got nuttin. De chil'n ain big 'nough to do nuttin but eat; he 'ain' not no brurrs, an' he deddy took 'way an' sold down Souf de same time my ole marster whar dead buy him; dat's what I al'ays heah 'em say, an' I know he's dead long befo' dis, 'cause I heah 'em say dese Virginia niggers carn stan' hit long deah, hit so hot, hit frizzle 'em up, an' I reckon he die befo' he ole marster, whar I heah say die of a broked heart torectly after dee teck he niggers an' sell 'em befo' he face. I heah Aunt Dinah say dat, an' dat he might'ly sot on he ole servants, spressaly on Ephum deddy, whar named Little Ephum, an' whar used to wait on him.

Dis mus' 'a' been a gret place dem days, 'cordin' to what dee say." She went on: "Dee say he sutny live strong, wuz jes rich as cream, an' weahed he blue coat an' brass buttons, an' lived in dat ole house whar was up whar de pines is now, an' whar bu'nt down, like he owned de wull. An' now look at it; dat man own it all, an' cuttin' all de woods off it. He don't know nuttin 'bout black folks, ain' nuver been fotch up wid 'em. Who ever heah he name 'fo' he come heah an' buy de place, an' move in de overseer house, an' charge we all eight hundred dollars for dis land, jes 'cause it got little piece o' bottom on it, an' forty-eight dollars rent besides, wid he ole stingy wife whar oon' even gi' 'way buttermilk!" An expression of mingled disgust and contempt concluded the reflection.

She took the ash-cake out of the ashes, slapped it first on one side, then on the other, with her hand, dusted it with her apron, and walked to the door and poured a gourd of water from the piggin over it. Then she divided it in half; one half she set up against the side of the chimney, the other she broke up into smaller pieces and distributed among the children, dragging the sleeping Eph, limp and soaked with sleep, from the cradle to receive his share. Her manner was not rough—was perhaps even tender—but she used no caresses, as a white woman would have done under the circumstances. It was only toward the baby at the breast that she exhibited any endearments. Her nearest approach to it with the others was when she told them, as she portioned out the ash-

cake, "Mammy ain't got nuttin else; but nuver min', she gwine have plenty o' good meat next year, when deddy done pay for he land."

"Hi! who dat out dyah?" she said, suddenly. "Run to de do', son, an' see who dat comin'," and the whole tribe rushed to inspect the new-comer.

It was, as she suspected, her husband, and as soon as he entered she saw that something was wrong. He dropped into a chair, and sat in moody silence, the picture of fatigue, physical and mental. After waiting for some time, she asked, indifferently. "What de matter?"

"Dat man."

"What he done do now?" The query was sharp with suspicion.

"He say he ain' gwine let me have my land."

"He's a half-strainer," said the woman, with sudden anger. "How he gwine help it? Ain' you got crap on it?" She felt that there must be a defence against such an outrage.

"He say he ain' gwine wait no longer; dat I wuz to have tell Christmas to finish payin' for it, an' I ain' do it, an' now he done change he min'."

"Tell dis Christmas comin'," said his wife, with the positiveness of one accustomed to expound contracts.

"Yes; but I tell you he say he done change he min'." The man had evidently given up all hope; he was dead beat.

"De crap's yourn," said she, affected by his surrender, but prepared only to compromise.

"He say he gwine teck all dat for de rent, and dat he gwine drive Ole 'Stracted 'way too."

"He ain' nuttin but po' white trash!" It expressed her supreme contempt.

"He say he'll gi' me jes one week mo' to pay him all he ax for it," continued he, forced to a correction by her intense feeling, and the instinct of a man to defend the absent from a woman's attack, and perhaps in the hope that she might suggest some escape.

"He ain' nuttin sep po' white trash!" she repeated. "How you gwine raise eight hundred dollars at once? Dee kyarn nobody do dat. Gord mout! He ain' got good sense."

"You ain' see dat corn lately, is you?" he asked. "Hit jes as rank! You can almos' see it growin' ef you look at it good. Dat's strong land. I know dat when I buy it."

He knew it was gone now, but he had been in the habit of calling it his in the past three years, and it did him good to claim the ownership a little longer.

"I wonder whar Marse Johnny is?" said the woman. He was the son of her former owner; and now, finding her proper support failing her, she instinctively turned to him. "He wouldn' let him turn we all out."

"He ain' got nuttin, an' ef he is, he kyarn get it in a week," said Ephraim.

"Kyarn you teck it in de co't?"

"Dat's whar he say he gwine have it ef I don' git out," said her husband, despairingly.

Her last defence was gone.

"Ain' you hongry?" she inquired.

"What you got?"

"I jes gwine kill a chicken for you."

It was her nearest approach to tenderness, and he knew it was a mark of special attention, for all the chickens and eggs had for the past three years gone to swell the fund which was to buy the home, and it was only on special occasions that one was spared for food.

The news that he was to be turned out of his home had fallen on him like a blow, and had stunned him; he could make no resistance, he could form no plans. He went into a rough estimate as he waited.

"Le' me see: I done wuck for it three years dis Christmas done gone; how much does dat meck?"

"An' fo' dollars, an' five dollars, an' two dollars an' a half last Christmas from de chickens, an' all dem ducks I done sell he wife, an' de washin' I been doin' for 'em; how much is dat?" supplemented his wife.

"Dat's what I say!"

His wife endeavored vainly to remember the amount she had been told it was; but the unaccounted-for washing changed the sum and destroyed her reliance on the result. And as the chicken was now approaching perfection, and required her undivided attention, she gave up the arithmetic and applied herself to her culinary duties.

Ephraim also abandoned the attempt, and waited in a reverie, in which he saw corn stand so high and rank over his land that he could scarcely distinguish the bulk, and a stable and barn and a mule, or maybe

two—it was a possibility—and two cows which his wife would milk, and a green wagon driven by his boys, while he took it easy and gave orders like a master, and a clover patch, and wheat, and he saw the yellow grain waving, and heard his sons sing the old harvest song of "Cool Water" while they swung their cradles, and—

"You say he gwine turn Ole 'Stracted out, too?" inquired his wife, breaking the spell. The chicken was done now, and her mind reverted to the all-engrossing subject.

"Yes; say he tired o' ole 'stracted nigger livin' on he place an' payin' no rent."

"Good Gord A'mighty! Pay rent for dat ole pile o' logs! Ain't he been mendin' he shoes an' harness for rent all dese years?"

" 'Twill kill dat ole man to tu'n him out dat house," said Ephraim; "he ain 'nuver stay away from dyah a hour since he come heah."

"Sutny 'twill," assented his wife; then she added, in reply to the rest of the remark, "Nuver min'; den we'll see what he got in dyah." To a woman, that was at least some compensation. Ephraim's thoughts had taken a new direction.

"He al'ays feared he marster'd come for him while he 'way," he said, in mere continuance of his last remark.

"He sen' me wud he marster comin' to-night, an' he want he shut," said his wife, as she handed him his supper. Ephraim's face expressed more than interest; it was tenderness which softened the rugged lines

as he sat looking into the fire. Perhaps he thought of the old man's loneliness, and of his own father torn away and sold so long ago, before he could even remember, and perhaps very dimly of the beauty of the sublime devotion of this poor old creature to his love and his trust, holding steadfast beyond memory, beyond reason, after the knowledge even of his own identity and of his very name was lost.

The woman caught the contagion of his sympathy.

"De chil'n say he mighty comical, an' he layin' down in de baid," she said.

Ephraim rose from his seat.

"Whar you gwine?"

"I mus' go to see 'bout him," he said, simply.

"Ain' you gwine finish eatin'?"

"I gwine kyar dis to him."

"Well, I kin cook you anurr when we come back," said his wife, with ready acquiescence.

In a few minutes they were on the way, going single file down the path through the sassafras, along which little Eph and his followers had come an hour before, the man in the lead and his wife following, and, according to the custom of their race, carrying the bundles, one the surrendered supper and the other the neatly folded and well-patched shirt in which Ole 'Stracted hoped to meet his long-expected loved ones.

As they came in sight of the ruinous little hut which had been the old man's abode since his sudden appearance in the neighborhood a few years after the war, they observed that the bench beside the door was

deserted, and that the door stood ajar—two circumstances which neither of them remembered ever to have seen before; for in all the years in which he had been their neighbor Ole 'Stracted had never admitted any one within his door, and had never been known to leave it open. In mild weather he occupied a bench outside, where he either cobbled shoes for his neighbors, accepting without question anything they paid him, or else sat perfectly quiet, with the air of a person waiting for some one. He held only the briefest communication with anybody, and was believed by some to have intimate relations with the Evil One, and his tumble-down hut, which he was particular to keep closely daubed, was thought by such as took this view of the matter to be the temple where he practiced his unholy rites. For this reason, and because the little cabin, surrounded by dense pines and covered with vines which the popular belief held "pizenous," was the most desolate abode a human being could have selected, most of the dwellers in that section gave the place a wide berth, especially toward nightfall, and Ole 'Stracted would probably have suffered but for the charity of Ephraim and his wife, who, although often wanting the necessaries of life themselves, had long divided it with their strange neighbor. Yet even they had never been admitted inside his door, and knew no more of him than the other people about the settlement knew.

His advent in the neighborhood had been mysterious. The first that was known of him was one summer morning, when he was found sitting on the bench

beside the door of this cabin, which had long been unoccupied and left to decay. He was unable to give any account of himself, except that he always declared that he had been sold by some one other than his master from that plantation, that his wife and boy had been sold to some other person at the same time for twelve hundred dollars (he was particular as to the amount), and that his master was coming in the summer to buy him back and take him home, and would bring him his wife and child when he came. Everything since that day was a blank to him, and as he could not tell the name of his master or wife, or even his own name, and as no one was left old enough to remember him, the neighborhood having been entirely deserted after the war, he simply passed as a harmless old lunatic laboring under a delusion. He was devoted to children, and Ephraim's small brood were his chief delight. They were not at all afraid of him, and whenever they got a chance they would slip off and steal down to his house, where they might be found any time squatting about his feet, listening to his accounts of his expected visit from his master, and what he was going to do afterward. It was all of a great plantation, and fine carriages and horses, and a house with his wife and the boy.

This was all that was known of him, except that once a stranger, passing through the country, and hearing the name Ole 'Stracted, said that he heard a similar one once, long before the war, in one of the Louisiana parishes, where the man roamed at will, having been bought of the trader by the gentleman

who owned him, for a small price, on account of his infirmity.

"Is you gwine in dyah?" asked the woman, as they approached the hut.

"Hi! yes; 'tain' nuttin' gwine hu't you; an' you say Ephum say he be layin' in de baid?" he replied, his mind having evidently been busy on the subject.

"An' mighty comical," she corrected him, with exactness born of apprehension.

"Well? I 'feared he sick."

"I ain' nuver been in dyah," she persisted.

"Ain' de chil'n been in dyah?"

"Dee say 'stracted folks oon hu't chil'n."

"Dat ole man oon hu't nobody; he jes tame as a ole tomcat."

"I wonder he ain' feared to live in dat lonesome ole house by hisself. I jes lieve stay in a graveyard at once. I ain' wonder folks say he sees sperrits in dat hanty-lookin' place." She came up by her husband's side at the suggestion. "I wonder he don' go home."

"Whar he got any home to go to sep heaven?" said Ephraim.

"What was you mammy name, Ephum?"

"Mymy," said he, simply.

They were at the cabin now, and a brief pause of doubt ensued. It was perfectly dark inside the door, and there was not a sound. The bench where they had heretofore held their only communication with their strange neighbor was lying on its side in the weeds which grew up to the very walls of the ruinous

cabin, and a lizard suddenly ran over it, and with a little rustle disappeared under the rotting ground-sill. To the woman it was an ill omen. She glanced furtively behind her, and moved nearer her husband's side. She noticed that the cloud above the pines was getting a faint yellow tinge on its lower border, while it was very black above them. It filled her with dread, and she was about to call her husband's notice to it, when a voice within arrested their attention. It was very low, and they both listened in awed silence, watching the door meanwhile as if they expected to see something supernatural spring from it.

"Nem min'—jes wait—'tain so long now—he'll be heah torectly," said the voice. "Dat's what he say—gwine come an' buy me back—den we gwine home."

In their endeavor to catch the words they moved nearer, and made a slight noise. Suddenly the low, earnest tone changed to one full of eagerness.

"Who dat?" was called in sharp inquiry.

"'Tain' nobody but me an' Polly, Ole 'Stracted," said Ephraim, pushing the door slightly wider open and stepping in. They had an indistinct idea that the poor deluded creature had fancied them his longed-for loved ones, yet it was a relief to see him bodily.

"Who you say you is?" inquired the old man, feebly.

"Me an' Polly."

"I done bring you shut home," said the woman, as if supplementing her husband's reply. "Hit all bran' clean, an' I done patch it."

"Oh, I thought—" said the voice, sadly.

They knew what he thought. Their eyes were now accustomed to the darkness, and they saw that the only article of furniture which the room contained was the wretched bed or bench on which the old man was stretched. The light sifting through the chinks in the roof enabled them to see his face, and that it had changed much in the last twenty-four hours, and an instinct told them that he was near the end of his long waiting.

"How is you, Ole 'Stracted?" asked the woman.

"Dat ain' my name," answered the old man, promptly. It was the first time he had ever disowned the name.

"Well, how is you, Ole— What I gwine to call you?" asked she, with feeble finesse.

"I don' know—he kin tell you."

"Who?"

"Who? Marster. He know it. Ole 'Stracted ain' know it; but dat ain' nuttin. *He* know it—got it set down in de book. I jes waitin' for 'em now."

A hush fell on the little audience—they were in full sympathy with him, and, knowing no way of expressing it, kept silence. Only the breathing of the old man was audible in the room. He was evidently nearing the end. "I mighty tired of waitin'," he said, pathetically. "Look out dyah and see ef you see anybody," he added suddenly.

Both of them obeyed, and then returned and stood silent; they could not tell him no.

Presently the woman said, "Don' you warn put you' shut on?"

"What did you say my name was?" he said.

"Ole 'Str—" She paused at the look of pain on his face, shifted uneasily from one foot to the other, and relapsed into embarrassed silence.

"Nem min'! dee'll know it—dee'll know me 'dout any name, oon dee?" He appealed wistfully to them both. The woman for answer unfolded the shirt. He moved feebly, as if in assent.

"I so tired waitin'," he whispered; "done 'mos gin out, an' he oon come; but I thought I heah little Eph to-day?" There was a faint inquiry in his voice.

"Yes, he wuz heah."

"Wuz he?" The languid form became instantly alert, the tired face took on a look of eager expectancy. "Heah, gi' m'y shut quick. I knowed it. Wait; go over dyah, son, and git me dat money. He'll be heah torectly." They thought his mind wandered, and merely followed the direction of his eyes with theirs. "Go over dyah quick—don't you heah me?"

And to humor him Ephraim went over to the corner indicated.

"Retch up dyah, an' run you' hand in onder de second jice. It's all in dyah," he said to the woman —"twelve hunderd dollars—dat's what dee went for. I wucked night an' day forty year to save dat money for marster; you know dee teck all he land an' all he niggers an' tu'n him out in de old fiel'? I put 'tin dyah 'ginst he come. You ain' know he comin' dis evenin', is you? Heah, help me on wid dat shut, gal

—I stan'in' heah talkin' an' maybe ole marster waitin'. Push de do' open so you kin see. Forty year ago," he murmured, as Polly jammed the door back and returned to his side—"forty year ago dee come an' leveled on me: marster sutny did cry. 'Nem min',' he said, 'I comin' right down in de summer to buy you back an' bring you home.' He's comin', too—nuver tol' me a lie in he life—comin' dis evenin.' Make 'aste." This in tremulous eagerness to the woman, who had involuntarily caught the feeling, and was now with eager and ineffectual haste trying to button his shirt.

An exclamation from her husband caused her to turn around, as he stepped into the light and held up an old sock filled with something.

"Heah, hol you' apron," said the old man to Polly, who gathered up the lower corners of her apron and stood nearer the bed.

"Po' it in dyah." This to Ephraim, who mechanically obeyed. He pulled off the string, and poured into his wife's lap the heap of glittering coin—gold and silver more than their eyes had ever seen before.

"Hit's all dyah," said the old man, confidentially, as if he were rendering an account. "I been savin' it ever sence dee took me 'way. I so busy savin' it I ain' had time to eat, but I ain' hongry now; have plenty when I git home." He sank back exhausted. "Oon marster be glad to see me?" he asked presently in pathetic simplicity. "You know we grewed up togerr? I been waitin' so long I 'feared dee 'mos' done

forgit me. You reckon dee is?" he asked the woman, appealingly.

"No, suh, dee ain' forgit you," she said, comfortingly.

"I know dee ain'," he said, reassured. "Dat's what he tell me—he ain' nuver gwine forgit me." The reaction had set in, and his voice was so feeble now it was scarcely audible. He was talking rather to himself than to them, and finally he sank into a doze. A painful silence reigned in the little hut, in which the only sign was the breathing of the dying man. A single shaft of light stole down under the edge of the slowly passing cloud and slipped up to the door. Suddenly the sleeper waked with a start, and gazed around.

"Hit gittin' mighty dark," he whispered, faintly. "You reckon dee'll git heah 'fo' dark?"

The light was dying from his eyes.

"Ephum," said the woman, softly, to her husband.

The effect was electrical.

"Heish! you heah dat!" exclaimed the dying man, eagerly.

"Ephum"—she repeated. The rest was drowned by Ole 'Stracted's joyous exclamation.

"Gord! I knowed it!" he cried, suddenly rising upright, and, with beaming face, stretching both arms toward the door. "Dyah dee come! Now watch 'em smile. All y'all jes stand back. Heah de one you lookin' for. Marster—Mymy—heah's Little Ephum!" And with a smile on his face he sank back into his son's arms.

The evening sun, dropping on the instant to his setting, flooded the room with light; but as Ephraim gently eased him down and drew his arm from around him, it was the light of the unending morning that was on his face. His Master had at last come for him, and after his long waiting, Ole 'Stracted had indeed gone home.

OUR CONSUL AT CARLSRUHE

BY F. J. STIMSON

Frederic Jesup Stimson (born July 20, 1855, in Dedham, Mass.) has won a double reputation in authorship. His books on American law, in the special departments of statute law, labor law, and uniform State legislation, are accepted by all lawyers as standard; and his novels and short stories are held up by the masters of literary criticism as the best models of that order of fiction in which the deep emotions held in reserve by persons of culture and refinement are delicately and tenderly revealed through natural, though not trivial, events. The earlier stories and novels of Mr. Stimson were published under the pen name of "J. S. of Dale." He has chosen "Our Consul at Carlsruhe" to appear in the present series as representative of his work in brief fiction.

OUR CONSUL AT CARLSRUHE

F. J. STIMSON ("J. S. OF DALE")

DIED.—*In Baden, Germany, the 22d instant, Charles Austin Pinckney, late U. S. Consul at Carlsruhe, aged sixty years.*

There: most stories of men's lives end with the epitaph, but this of Pinckney's shall begin there. If we, as haply God or Devil can, could unroof the houses of men's souls, if their visible works were of their hearts rather than their brains, we should know strange things. And this alone, of all the possible, is certain. For bethink you, how men appear to their Creator, as He looks down into the soul, that matrix of their visible lives we find so hard to localize and yet so sure to be. For all of us believe in self, and few of us but are forced, one way or another, to grant existence to some selves outside of us. Can you not fancy that men's souls, like their farms, would show here a patch of grain, and there the tares; there the weeds and here the sowing; over this place the rain has been, and that other, to one looking down upon it from afar, seems brown and desolate, wasted by fire or made arid by the drought? In this man's life is a poor beginning, but a better end; in this other's we see the foundations, the staging, and the schemes of mighty structures, now

By permission of the publishers, from "The Sentimental Calendar," by J. S. of Dale (F. J. Stimson). Copyright, 1886, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

stopped, given over, or abandoned; of vessels, fashioned for the world's seas, now rotting on the stocks. Of this one all seems ready but the launching, of that the large keelson only has been laid; but both alike have died unborn, and the rain falls upon them, and the mosses grow: the sound of labor is far off, and the scene of work is silent. Small laws make great changes; slight differences of adjustment end quick in death. Small, now, they would seem to us; but to the infinite mind all things small and great are alike; the spore of rust in the ear is very slight, but a famine in the corn will shake the world.

Pinckney's life the world called lazy; his leisure was not fruitful, and his sixty years of life were but a gentleman's. Some slight lesion may have caused paralysis of energy, some clot of heart's blood pressed upon the soul: I make no doubt our doctors could diagnose it, if they knew a little more. Tall and slender, he had a strange face, a face with a young man's beauty; his white hair gave a charm to the rare smile, like new snow to the spring, and the slight stoop with which he walked was but a grace the more. In short, Pinckney was interesting. Women raved about him; young men fell in love with him; and if he was selfish, the fault lay between him and his Maker, not visible to other men. There are three things that make a man interesting in his old age: the first, being heroism, we may put aside; but the other two are regret and remorse. Now, Mr. Pinckney's fragrance was not of remorse—women and young men would have called it heroism: it may have been.

As much heroism as could be practiced in thirty-six years of Carlsruhe.

Why Carlsruhe? That was the keynote of inquiry; and no one knew. Old men spoke unctuously of youthful scandals; women dreamed. I suspect even Mrs. Pinckney wondered, about as much as the plowed field may wonder at the silence of the autumn. But Pinckney limped gracefully about the sleepy avenues which converge at the Grand Duke's palace, like a wakeful page in the castle of the Sleeping Beauty. Pinckney was a friend of the Grand Duke's, and perhaps it was a certain American flavor persisting in his manners which made him seem the only man at the Baden court who met his arch-serene altitude on equal terms. For one who had done nothing and possessed little, Pinckney certainly preserved a marvelous personal dignity. His four daughters were all married to scions of Teutonic nobility; and each one in turn had asked him for the Pinckney arms, and quartered them into the appropriate check-square with as much grave satisfaction as he felt for the far-off patch of Hohenzollern, or of Hapsburg in sinister chief. Pinckney had laughed at it and referred them to the Declaration of Independence, clause the first; but his wife had copied them from some spoon or sugar bowl. She was very fond of Pinckney, and no more questioned him why they always lived in Carlsruhe than a Persian would the sun for rising east. Now and then they went to Baden, and her cup was full.

Pinckney died of a cold, unostentatiously, and was buried like a gentleman; though the Grand Duke ac-

tually wanted to put the court in mourning for three days, and consulted with his chamberlain whether it would do. Mrs. Pinckney had preceded him by some six years; but she was an appendage, and her husband's deference had always seemed in Carlsruhe a trifle strained. It was only in these last six years that any one had gossiped of remorse, in answer to the sphinx-like question of his marble brow. Such questions vex the curious. Furrows trouble nobody—money matters are enough for them; but white smoothness in old age is a bait, and tickles curiosity. Some said at home he was a devil and beat his wife.

But Pinckney never beat his wife. Late in the last twilight of her life she had called him to her, and excluded even the four daughters, with their stout and splendid barons; then, alone with him, she looked to him and smiled. And suddenly his gentleman's heart took a jump, and the tears fell on her still soft hands. I suppose some old road was opened again in the gray matter of his brain. Mrs. Pinckney smiled the more strongly and said—not quite so terribly as Mrs. Amos Barton: "Have I made you happy, dearest Charles?" And Charles, the perfect-mannered, said she had; but said it stammering. "Then," said she, "I die very happily, dear." And she did; and Pinckney continued to live at Carlsruhe.

The only activities of Pinckney's mind were critical. He was a wonderful orator, but he rarely spoke. People said he could have been a great writer, but he never wrote, at least nothing original. He was the art and continental-drama critic of several English and

American reviews; in music, he was a Wagnerian, which debarred him from writing of it except in German; but the little Court Theatre at Carlsruhe has Wagner's portrait over the drop-curtain, and the consul's box was never empty when the mighty heathen legends were declaimed or the holy music of the Grail was sung. In fiction of the earnest sort, and poetry, Pinckney's critical pen showed a marvelous magic, striking the scant springs of the author's inspiration through the most rocky ground of incident or style. He had a curious sympathy with youthful tenderness. But, after all, as every young compatriot who went to Baden said, what the deuce and all did he live in Baden for? Miles Breeze had said it in 'Fifty, when he made the grand tour with his young wife, and dined with him in Baden-Baden; that is, when Breeze dined with him, for his young wife was indisposed and could not go. Miles Breeze, junior, had said it, as late as 'Seventy-six, when he went abroad, ostensibly for instruction, after leaving college. He had letters to Mr. Pinckney, who was very kind to the young Baltimorean, and greatly troubled the Grand Duke his Serenity by presenting him as a relative of the Bonapartes. Many another American had said it, and even some leading politicians: he might have held office at home: but Pinckney continued to live in Carlsruhe.

His critical faculties seemed sharpened after his wife's death, as his hair grew whiter; and if you remember how he looked before you must have noticed that the greatest change was in the expression of his

face. There was one faint downward line at either side of his mouth, and the counterpart at the eyes; a doubtful line which, faint as it was graven, gave a strange amount of shading to the face. And in speaking of him still earlier, you must remember to take your india-rubber and rub out this line from his face. This done, the face is still serious; but it has a certain light, a certain air of confidence, of determination, regretful though it be, which makes it loved by women. Women can love a desperate, but never begin to love a beaten, cause. Women fell in love with Pinckney, for the lightning does strike twice in the same place; but his race was rather that of Lohengrin than of the Asra, and he saw it, or seemed to see it, not. Still, in these times those downward lines had not come, and there was a certain sober light in his face as of a sorrowful triumph. This was in the epoch of his greatest interestingness to women.

When he first came to Carlsruhe, he was simply the new consul, nothing more; a handsome young man, almost in his honeymoon, with a young and pretty wife. He had less presence in those days, and seemed absorbed in his new home, or deeply sunk in something; people at first fancied he was a poet, meditating a great work, which finished, he would soon leave Carlsruhe. He never was seen to look at a woman, not overmuch at his wife, and was not yet popular in society.

But it was true that he was newly married. He was married in Boston, in 'Forty-three or four, to Emily Austin, a far-off cousin of his, whom he had known

(he himself was a Carolinian) during his four years at Cambridge. For his four years in Cambridge were succeeded by two more at the Law School; then he won a great case against Mr. Choate, and was narrowly beaten in an election for Congress; after that it surprised no one to hear the announcement of his engagement to Miss Austin, for his family was unexceptionable and he had a brilliant future. The marriage came in the fall, rather sooner than people expected, at King's Chapel. They went abroad, as was natural; and then he surprised his friends and hers by accepting his consulship and staying there. And they were imperceptibly, gradually, slowly, and utterly forgotten.

The engagement came out in the spring of 'Forty-three. And in June of that year young Pinckney had gone to visit his *fiancée* at Newport. Had you seen him there, you would have seen him in perhaps the brightest rôle that fate has yet permitted on this world's stage. A young man, a lover, rich, gifted, and ambitious, of social position unquestioned in South Carolina and the old Bay State—all the world loved him, as a lover; the many envied him, the upper few desired him. Handsome he has always remained.

And the world did look to him as bright as he to the world. He was in love, as he told himself, and Miss Austin was a lovable girl; and the other things he was dimly conscious of; and he had a long vacation ahead of him, and was to be married late in the autumn, and he walked up from the wharf in New-

port swinging his cane and thinking on these pleasant things.

Newport, in those days, was not the paradise of cottages and curricles, of lawns and laces, of new New Yorkers and Nevada miners; it was the time of big hotels and balls, of Southern planters, of Jullien's orchestras, and of hotel hops; such a barbarous time as the wandering New Yorker still may find, lingering on the simple shores of Maine, sunning in the verdant valleys of the Green Mountains; in short, it was Arcadia, not Belgravia. And you must remember that Pinckney, who was dressed in the latest style, wore a blue broadcloth frock coat, cut very low and tight in the waist, with a coat-collar rolling back to reveal a vast expanse of shirt-bosom, surmounted by a cravat of awful splendor, bow-knotted and blue-fringed. His trousers were of white duck, his boots lacquered, and he carried a gold-tipped cane in his hand. So he walked up the narrow old streets from the wharf, making a sunshine in those shady places. It was the hottest hour of a midsummer afternoon; not a soul was stirring, and Pinckney was left to his own pleasant meditations.

He got up the hill and turned into the park by the old mill; over opposite was the great hotel, its piazzas deserted, silent even to the hotel band. But one flutter of a white dress he saw beneath the trees, and then it disappeared behind them, causing Pinckney to quicken his steps. He thought he knew the shape and motion, and he followed it until he came upon it suddenly, behind the trees, and it turned.

A young girl of wonderful beauty, rare, erect carriage, and eyes of a strange, violet-gray, full of much meaning. This was all Pinckney had time to note; it was no one he had ever seen before. He had gone up like a hunter, sure of his game, and too far in it to retract. The embarrassment of the situation was such that Pinckney forgot all his cleverness of manner, and blurted out the truth like any schoolboy.

"I beg pardon—I was looking for Miss Austin," said he; and he raised his hat.

A delightful smile of merriment curled the beauty's lips. "My acquaintance with Miss Austin is too slight to justify my finding her for you; but I wish you all success in your efforts," she said, and vanished, leaving the promising young lawyer to blush at his own awkwardness and wonder who she was. As she disappeared, he only saw that her hair was a lustrous coil of pale gold-brown, borne proudly.

He soon found Emily Austin, and forgot the beauty, as he gave his betrothed a kiss and saw her color heighten; and in the afternoon they took a long drive. It was only at tea, as he was sitting at table with the Austins in the long dining-room, that some one walked in like a goddess; and it was she. He asked her name; and they told him it was a Miss Warfield, of Baltimore, and she was engaged to a Mr. Breeze.

In the evening there was a ball; and as they were dancing (for every one danced in those days) he saw her again, sitting alone this time and unattended. She was looking eagerly across the room, through the dancers and beyond; and in her eyes was the deepest

look of sadness Pinckney had ever seen in a girl's face; a look such as he had thought no girl could feel. A moment after, and it was gone, as some one spoke to her; and Pinckney wondered if he had not been mistaken, so fleeting was it, and so strange. An acquaintance—one of those men who delight to act as brokers of acquaintances—who had noticed his gaze came up. "That is the famous Miss Mary Warfield," said he. "Shall I not introduce you?"

"No," said Pinckney; and he turned away rudely. To be rude when you like is perhaps one of the choicest prerogatives of a good social position. The acquaintance stared after him, as he went back to Miss Austin, and then went up and spoke to Miss Warfield himself. A moment after, Pinckney saw her look over at him with some interest; and he wondered if the man had been ass enough to tell her. Pinckney was sitting with Emily Austin; and, after another moment, he saw Miss Warfield look at her. Then her glance seemed to lose its interest; her eyelids drooped, and Pinckney could see, from her interlocutor's manner, that he was put to his trumps to keep her attention. At last he got away, awkwardly; and for many minutes the strange girl sat like a statue, her long lashes just veiling her eyes, so that Pinckney, from a distance, could not see what was in them. Suddenly the veil was drawn and her eyes shone full upon him, her look meeting his. Pinckney's glance fell, and his cheeks grew redder. Miss Warfield's face did not change, but she rose and walked unattended through the centre of the ballroom to the door. Pinckney's seat was

nearer it than hers; she passed him as if without seeing him, moving with unconscious grace, though it would not have been the custom at that time for a girl to cross so large a room alone. Just then some one asked Miss Austin for a dance; and Pinckney, who was growing weary of it, went out on the piazza for a cigar, and then, attracted by the beauty of the night, strayed further than he knew, alone, along the cliffs above the sea.

The next day he was walking with Miss Austin, and they passed her, in her riding habit, waiting by the mounting stone; she bowed to Miss Austin alone, leaving him out, as it seemed to Pinckney, with exaggerated care.

"Is she not beautiful?" said Emily, ardently.

"Humph!" said Pinckney. A short time after, as they were driving on the road to the Fort, he saw her again; she was riding alone, across country, through the rocky knolls and marshy pools that form the southern part of Rhode Island. She had no groom lagging behind, but it was not so necessary then as now; and, indeed, a groom would have had a hard time to keep up with her, as she rattled up the granite slopes and down over logs and bushes with her bright bay horse. The last Pinckney saw of her she disappeared over a rocky hill against the sky; her beautiful horse flecked with foam, quivering with happy animal life, and the girl calm as a figure carved in stone, with but the faintest touch of rose upon her face, as the pure profile was outlined one moment against the sunlit blue.

"How recklessly she rides!" whispered Miss Austin to him, and Pinckney said *yes,* absently, and, whipping up his horse, drove on, pretending to listen to his fiancée's talk. It seemed to be about dresses, and rings, and a coming visit to the B——s, at Nahant. He had never seen a girl like her before; she was a puzzle to him.

"It is a great pity she is engaged to Mr. Breeze," said Miss Austin; and Pinckney woke up with a start, for he was thinking of Miss Warfield too.

"Why?" said he.

"I don't like him," said Emily. "He isn't good enough for her."

As this is a thing that women say of all wooers after they have won, and which the winner is usually at that period the first to admit, Pinckney paid little attention to this remark. But that evening he met Miles Breeze, saw him, talked with him, and heard others talk of him. A handsome man, physically; well made, well dressed, well fed; well bred, as breeding goes in dogs or horses; a good shot, a good sportsman, yachtsman, story-teller; a good fellow, with a weak mouth; a man of good old Maryland blood, yet red and healthy, who had come there in his yacht and had his horses sent by sea. A well-appointed man, in short; provided amply with the conveniences of fashionable life. A man of good family, good fortune, good health, good sense, good nature, whom it were hypercritical to charge with lack of soul. "The first duty of a gentleman is to be a good animal," and Miles Breeze performed it thor-

oughly. Pinckney liked him, and he could have been his companion for years and still have liked him, except as a husband for Miss Warfield.

He could not but recognize his excellence as a *parti.* But the race of Joan of Arc does not mate with Bonhomme Richard, even when he owns the next farm. Pinckney used to watch the crease of Breeze's neck, above the collar, and curse.

Coming upon Miss Austin one morning, she had said, "Come—I want to introduce you to Miss Warfield." Pinckney had demurred, and offered as an excuse that he was smoking. "Nonsense, Charles," said the girl; "I have told her you are coming." Pinckney threw away his cigar and followed, and the presentation was made. Miss Warfield drew herself almost unusually erect after courtesying, as if in protest at having to bow at all. She was so tall that, as Emily stood between them, he could meet Miss Warfield's iron-gray eyes above her head. It was the first time in Pinckney's life that he had consciously not known what to say.

"I was so anxious to have you meet Charles before he left," said Emily. Evidently, his fiancée had been expatiating upon him to this new friend, and if there is anything that puts a man in a foolish position it is to have this sort of preamble precede an acquaintance.

"An anxiety I duly shared, Miss Warfield, I assure you," said he; which was a truth spoiled in the uttering—what the conversational Frenchman terms *banale.*

"Thank you," said Miss Warfield, very simply and tremendously effectively. Pinckney, for the second time with this young lady, felt himself a schoolboy. Emily interposed some feeble commonplaces, and then, after a moment, Miss Warfield said, "I must go for my ride"; and she left, with a smile for Emily and the faintest possible glance for him. She went off with Breeze; and it gave Pinckney some relief to see that she seemed equally to ignore the presence of the man who was her acknowledged lover, as he trotted on a smart cob beside her. That evening, when he went on the piazza after tea, he found her sitting alone, in one corner, with her hands folded: it was one peculiarity about this woman that she was never seen with work. She made no sign of recognition as he approached; but, none the less, he took the chair that was beside her and waited a moment for her to speak. "Have you found Miss Austin?" said the beauty, with the faintest trace of malice in her coldly modulated tones, not looking at him. "I am not looking for Miss Austin," said he; and she continued not looking at him, and so this strange pair sat there in the twilight, silent.

What was said between them I do not know. But in some way or other their minds met; for long after Miss Austin and her mother had returned from some call, long after they had all left him, Pinckney continued to pace up and down restlessly in the dark. Pinckney had never seen a woman like this. After all, he was very young; and he had, in his heart, supposed that the doubts and delights of his soul were

peculiar to men alone. He thought all women—at all events, all young and worthy women—regarded life and its accepted forms as an accomplished fact, not to be questioned, and, indeed, too delightful to need it. The young South Carolinian, in his ambitions, in his heart-longings and heart-sickenings, in his poetry, even in his emotions, had always been lonely; so that his loneliness had grown to seem to him as merely part of the day's work. The best women, he knew, where the best housewives; they were a rest and a benefit for the war-weary man, much as might be a pretty child, a bed of flowers, a strain of music. With Emily Austin he should find all this; and he loved her as good, pretty, amiable, perfect in her way. But now, with Miss Warfield—it had seemed that he was not even lonely.

Pinckney did not see her again for a week. When he met her, he avoided her; she certainly avoided him. Breeze, meantime, gave a dinner. He gave it on his yacht, and gave it to men alone. Pinckney was of the number.

The next day there was a driving party; it was to drive out of town to Purgatory, a pretty place, where there is a brook in a deep ravine with a verdant meadow-floor; and there they were to take food and drink, as is the way of humanity in pretty places. Now it so happened that the Austins, Miss Warfield, Breeze, and Pinckney were going to drive in a party, the Austins and Miss Warfield having carriages of their own; but at the last moment Breeze did not appear, and Emily Austin was incapacitated

by a headache. She insisted, as is the way of loving women, that "Charles should not lose it"; for to her it was one of life's pleasures, and such pleasures satisfied her soul. (It may be that she gave more of her soul to life's duties than did Charles, and life's pleasures were thus adequate to the remainder; I do not know.) Probably Miles Breeze also had a headache; at all events, he did not, at the last moment, appear. It was supposable that he would turn up at the picnic; Mrs. Austin joined her daughter's entreaty; Miss Warfield was left unattended; in fine, Pinckney went with her.

Miss Warfield had a solid little phaeton with two stout ponies: she drove herself. For some time they were silent; then, insensibly, Pinckney began to talk and she to answer. What they said I need not say —indeed I could not, for Pinckney was a poet, a man of rare intellect and imagination, and Miss Warfield was a woman of this world and the next; a woman who used conventions as another might use a fan, to screen her from fools; whose views were based on the ultimate. But they talked of the world, and of life in it; and when it came to an end, Pinckney noted to himself this strange thing, that they had both talked as of an intellectual problem, no longer concerning their emotions—in short, as if this life were at an end, and they were two dead people discussing it.

So they arrived at the picnic, silent; and the people assembled looked to one another and smiled, and said to one another how glum those two engaged people looked, being together, and each wanting

another. Mr. Breeze had not yet come; and as the people scattered while the luncheon was being prepared, Pinckney and she wandered off like the others. They went some distance—perhaps a mile or more—aimlessly; and then, as they seemed to have come about to the end of the valley, Pinckney sat down upon a rock, but she did not do so, but remained standing. Hardly a word had so far been said between them: and then Pinckney looked at her and said:

"Why are you going to marry Mr. Breeze?"

"Why not?"—listlessly.

"You might as well throw yourself into the sea," said Pinckney; and he looked at the sea which lay beyond them shimmering.

"That I had not thought of," said she; and she looked at the sea herself with more interest. Pinckney drew a long breath.

"But why this man?" he said at length.

"Why that man?" said the woman; and her beautiful lip curled, with the humor of the mind, while her eyes kept still the sadness of the heart, the look that he had seen in the ballroom. "We are all poor," she added; then scornfully, "it is my duty to marry."

"But Miles Breeze?" persisted Pinckney.

The lip curled almost to a laugh. "I never met a better fellow than Miles," said she; and the thought was so like his own of the night before that Pinckney gasped for breath. They went back, and had chicken croquettes and champagne, and a band that was hidden in the wood made some wild Spanish music.

Going home, a curious thing happened. They had started first and far preceded all the others. Miss Warfield was driving; and when they were again in the main road, not more than a mile from the hotel, Pinckney saw ahead of them, coming in a light trotting buggy of the sort that one associates with the gentry who call themselves "sports," two of the gentlemen whom he had met at Breeze's dinner the night before. Whether Miss Warfield also knew them he did not know; but they evidently had more wine than was good for them, and were driving along in a reckless manner on the wrong side of the road. The buggy was much too narrow for the two; and the one that was driving leaned out toward them with a tipsy leer. Pinckney shouted at him, but Miss Warfield drove calmly on. He was on the point of grasping the reins, but a look of hers withheld him, and he sat still, wondering; and in a moment their small front wheel had crashed through both the axles and spider-web wheels of the trotting buggy. The shock of the second axle whirled them round, and Pinckney fell violently against the dasher, while Miss Warfield was thrown clear of the phaeton on the outer side. But she had kept the reins, and before Pinckney could get to her she was standing at her horses' heads, patting their necks calmly, with a slight cut in her forehead where she had fallen, and only her nostril quivering like theirs, as the horses stood there trembling. The buggy was a wreck, and the horse had disappeared; and the two men, sobered by the fall, came up humbly to her to apologize. She heard them

silently, with a pale face like some injured queen's; and then, bowing to them their dismissal, motioned Pinckney into the phaeton, which, though much broken, was still standing, and, getting in herself, drove slowly home.

"She might have killed herself," thought Pinckney, but he held his peace, as if it were the most natural course of action in the world. To tell the truth, under the circumstances he might have done the same alone.

Then it began. Pinckney could not keep this woman out of his head. He would think of her at all times, alone and in company. Her face would come to him in the loneliness of the sea, in the loneliness of crowds; the strong spirit of the morning was hers, and the sadness of the sunset and the wakeful watches of the night. Her face was in the clouds of evening, in the sea-coal fire by night; her spirit in the dreams of summer morns, in the hopeless breakers on the stormy shores, in the useless, endless effort of the sea. Her eyes made some strange shining through his dreams; and he would wake with a cry that she was going from him, in the deepest hours of the night, as if in the dreams he had lost her, vanishing forever in the daily crowd. Then he would lie awake until morning, and all the laws of God and men would seem like cobwebs to his sorrow, and the power of it freezing in his heart. This was the ultimate nature of his being, to follow her, as drop of water blends in drop of water, as frost rends rock. Let him then follow out his law, as other beings do theirs; gravitation has no

conscience; should he be weaker than a drop of water, because he was conscious, and a man?

So these early morning battles would go on, and character, training, conscience, would go down before the simpler force, like bands of man's upon essential nature. Then, with the first ray of the dawn, he would think of Emily Austin, sleeping near him, perhaps dreaming of him, and his mad visions seemed to fade; and he would rise exhausted, and wander out among the fresh fields and green dewy lanes, and calm, contentful trees, and be glad that these things were so; yet could these not be moved, nor their destiny be changed. And as for him, what did it matter?

So the days went by. And Emily Austin looked upon him with eyes of limitless love and trust, and Pinckney did not dare to look upon himself; but his mind judged by day-time and his heart strove by night. Hardly at all had he spoken to Miss Warfield since; and no reference had ever been made between them to the accident, or to the talk between them in the valley. Only Pinckney knew that she was to be married very shortly; and he had urged Miss Austin to hasten their own wedding.

Emily went off with her mother to pay her last visit among the family, and to make her preparations; and it was deemed proper that at this time Pinckney should not be with her. So he stayed in Newport five long days alone; and during this time he never spoke to Miss Warfield. I believe he tried not to look at her: she did not look at him. And on the fifth night

Pinckney swore that he must speak to her once more, whatever happened.

In the morning there was talk of a sailing party; and Pinckney noted Breeze busying himself about the arrangements. He waited; and at noon Breeze came to him and said that there was a scarcity of men: would he go? Yes. They had two sail-boats, and meant to land upon Conanicut, which was then a barren island without a house, upon the southern end, where it stretches out to sea.

Pinckney did not go in the same boat with Breeze and Miss Warfield; and, landing, he spent the afternoon with others and saw nothing of her. But after dinner was over, he spoke to her, inviting her to walk; and she came, silently. A strange evening promenade that was: they took a path close on the sheer brink of the cliffs, so narrow that one must go behind the other. Pinckney had thought at first she might be frightened, with the rough path, and the steepness of the rocks, and the breakers churning at their base; but he saw that she was walking erect and fearlessly. Finally she motioned him to let her go ahead; and she led the way, choosing indiscriminately the straightest path, whether on the verge of the sea or leading through green meadows. A few colorless remarks were made by him, and then he saw the folly of it, and they walked in silence. After nearly an hour, she stopped.

"We must be getting back," she said.

"Yes," said he, in the same tone; and they turned; she still leading the way, while he followed silently.

They were walking toward the sunset; the sun was going down in a bank of dense gray cloud, but its long, level rays came over to them, across a silent sea. She walked on over the rugged cliff, like some siren, some genius of the place, with a sure, proud grace of step; she never looked around, and his eyes were fixed upon the black line of her figure, as it went before him, toward the gray and blood-red sunset. It seemed to him this was the last hour of his life; and even as he thought his ankle turned, and he stumbled and fell, walking unwittingly into one of the chasms, where the line of the cliff turned in. He grasped a knuckle of rock, and held his fall, just on the brink of a ledge above the sea. Miss Warfield had turned quickly and seen it all; and she leaned down over the brink, with one hand around the rock and the other extended to help him, the ledge on which he lay being some six feet below. Pinckney grasped her hand and kissed it.

Her color did not change at this; but, with a strange strength in her beautiful lithe figure, she drew him up steadily, he helping partly with the other hand, until his knees rested on the path again. He stood up with some difficulty, as his ankle was badly wrenched.

"I am afraid you can not walk," said she.

"Oh, yes," he answered; and took a few steps to show her. The pain was great; but she walked on, and he followed, as best he could, limping. She looked behind now, as if to encourage him; and he set his teeth and smiled.

"We must not be late," she said. "It is growing dark, and they will miss us."

But they did not miss them; for when they got to the landing-place, both the sail-boats had left the shore without them. There was nothing but the purple cloud-light left by this time; but Pinckney fancied he could see her face grow pale for the first time that day.

"We must get home," she said, hurriedly. "Is there no boat?"

Pinckney pointed to a small dory on the beach, and then to the sea. In the east was a black bank of cloud, rifted now and then by lightning; and from it the wind came down and the white caps curled angrily toward them.

"No matter," said she; "we must go."

Pinckney found a pair of oars under the boat, and dragged it, with much labor, over the pebbles, she helping him. The beach was steep and gravelly, with short breakers rather than surf; and he got the bow well into the water and held it there.

"Get in," said he.

Miss Warfield got into the stern, and Pinckney waded out, dragging the flat-bottomed boat until it was well afloat. Then he sprang in himself, and, grasping the oars, headed the boat for the Fort point across the channel, three miles away. She sat silently in the stern, and it was too dark for him to see her face. He rowed savagely.

But the wind was straight ahead, and the sea increasing every moment. They were not, of course,

exposed to the full swell of the ocean; but the wide sea-channel was full of short, fierce waves that struck the little skiff repeated rapid blows, and dashed the spray over both of them.

"Are you not afraid?" said he, calmly. "It is growing rougher every minute."

"Oh, no, Mr. Pinckney," said she. "Pray keep on."

Pinckney noticed a tremor of excitement in her voice; but by a flash of lightning that came just then he saw her deep eyes fixed on his, and the pure white outline of her face undisturbed. So he rowed the harder, and she took a board there was and tried to steer; and now and then, as the clouds were lit, he saw her, like a fleeting vision in the night.

But the storm grew stronger; and Pinckney knew the boat that they were in was not really moving at all, though, of course, the swash of the waves went by and the drifted spray. He tried to row harder, but with the pain in his ankle and the labor he was nearly exhausted, and his heart jumped in his chest at each recover. "Can you not make it?" said she, in the dark; and Pinckney vowed that he could, and set his teeth for a mighty pull. The oar broke, and the boat's head fell rapidly off in the trough of the sea. He quickly changed about his remaining oar, and with it kept the head to the wind.

"We must go back," he said, panting.

"I know," said she. The windstorm was fairly upon them; and, in spite of all his efforts, an occasional wave would get upon the beam and spill its

frothing crest into the boat. Pinckney almost doubted whether it would float until it reached the shore; but Miss Warfield did not seem in the least disturbed, and spoke without a tremor in her voice. The lightning had stopped now, and he could not see her.

He had miscalculated the force of the wind and waves, however; for in a very minutes they were driven broadside back upon the beach, almost at the same place from which they had started. Miss Warfield sprang out quickly, and he after, just as a wave turned the dory bottom upward on the stones.

"They will soon send for us," he said; and stepping painfully up the shore, he occupied himself with spreading her shawl in a sheltered spot for them to wait in. She sat down, and he beside her. He was very wet, and she made him put some of the shawl over himself. The quick summer storm had passed now, with only a few big drops of rain; and the moon was breaking out fitfully through veils of driving clouds and their storm-scud. By its light he looked at her, and their eyes met. Pinckney groaned aloud, and stood up. "Would that they would never come; would God that we could—"

"We can not," said she, softly, in a voice that he had never heard from her before—a voice with tears in it; and the man threw himself down at her feet, inarticulate, maddened. Then, with a great effort at control, not touching her, but looking straight into her eyes, he said, in blunt, low speech: "Miss Warfield, I love you—do you know it?"

Her head sank slowly down; but she answered,

very low, but clearly, *yes*. Then their eyes met again; and, by some common impulse, they rose and walked apart. After a few steps, he stopped, being lame, and leaned against the cliff; but she went on until her dark figure was blended with the shadows of the crags.

So, when the boat came back, its sail silvered by the moonlight, they saw it, and, coming down, they met again; but only as the party were landing on the beach. Several of the party had come back; and Mr. Breeze, who was among them, was full of explanation how he had missed the first boat and barely caught the second, supposing that his fiancée was in the first. An awkward accident, but easily explained by Pinckney, with the sprain in his ankle; and, indeed, the others were too full of excuses for having forgotten them to inquire into the causes of their absence together.

Pinckney went to his room, and had a night of delirium. Toward morning, his troubled wakefulness ended, and he fell into a dream. He dreamed that in the centre of the world was one green bower, beneath a blossoming tree, and he and Miss Warfield were there. And the outer world was being destroyed, one sphere by fire and the other by flood, and there was only this bower left. But they could not stay there, or the tree would die. So they went away, he to the one side and she to the other, and the ruins of the world fell upon them, and they saw each other no more.

In the morning his delirium left him, and his will resumed its sway. He went down, and out into the

green roads, and listened to the singing of the birds; and then out to the cliff-path, and there he found Miss Warfield sitting as if she knew that he would come. He watched her pure face while she spoke, and her gray eyes: the clear light of the morning was in them, and on the gleaming sea beyond.

"You must go," said she.

"Yes," he said, and that was all. He took her hand for one moment, and lifted it lightly to his lips; then he turned and took the path across the fields. When he got to the first stile, he looked around. She was still sitting there, turned toward him. He lifted his hat, and held it for a second or two; then he turned the corner of the hedge and went down to the town.

Thus it happened that this story, which began sadly, with an epitaph, may end with wedding bells:

MARRIED. *At King's Chapel, by the Rev. Dr. A——, the 21st of September, Charles Austin Pinckney to Emily, daughter of the late James Austin.*

THE SOUL OF THE GREAT BELL

BY LAFCADIO HEARN

Lafcadio Hearn (born in the Ionian Islands, of an English father and Greek mother, June 27, 1850; died in Tokio, Japan, 1904) may be claimed as an American author, since all but his very latest works were produced in this country. He first displayed his picturesque power of description as a reporter on a Cincinnati newspaper. Then he drifted down to New Orleans, where Creole life and character afforded his peculiar genius rich and congenial material for books as well as newspaper sketches. Coming to New York, he devoted himself wholly to the highest and most artistic forms of literature. "The Soul of the Great Bell" has been selected to represent the author's work for its simple beauty of legendary form, and because it reveals the attraction the Orient always had for the author. Hearn finally abandoned Occidental civilization and went to Japan, where he died, probably the only unreconstructed "old Japanese" in the country.

She hath spoken, and her words still resound in his ears.

—*Hao-Khieou-Tchouan : c. ix.*

THE SOUL OF THE GREAT BELL

BY LAFCADIO HEARN

THE water-clock marks the hour in the *Ta-chung sz',* in the Tower of the Great Bell: now the mallet is lifted to smite the lips of the metal monster—the vast lips inscribed with Buddhist texts from the sacred *Fa-hwa-King,* from the chapters of the holy *Ling-yen-King!* Hear the great bell responding!—how mighty her voice, though tongueless!—*KO-NGAI!* All the little dragons on the high-tilted eaves of the green roofs shiver to the tips of their gilded tails under that deep wave of sound; all the porcelain gargoyles tremble on their carven perches; all the hundred little bells of the pagodas quiver with desire to speak. *KO-NGAI*—all the green-and-gold tiles of the temple are vibrating; the wooden goldfish above them are writhing against the sky; the uplifted finger of Fo shakes high over the heads of the worshipers through the blue fog of incense! *KO-NGAI!*—What a thunder tone was that! All the lacquered goblins on the palace cornices wriggle their fire-colored tongues! And after each huge shock, how wondrous the multiple echo and the great golden moan, and, at last, the sudden sibilant sobbing in the ears when the immense tone faints away in

By permission of Little, Brown & Co. From "Some Chinese Ghosts," copyright, 1887, by Roberts Brothers.

broken whispers of silver, as though a woman should whisper, *"Hiai!"* Even so the great bell hath sounded every day for wellnigh five hundred years—*Ko-Ngai:* first with stupendous clang, then with immeasurable moan of gold, then with silver murmuring of *"Hiai!"* And there is not a child in all the many-colored ways of the old Chinese city who does not know the story of the great bell, who can not tell you why the great bell says *Ko-Ngai* and *Hiai!*

Now, this is the story of the great bell in the *Ta-chung sz',* as the same is related in the *Pe-Hiao-Tou-Choue,* written by the learned Yu-Pao-Tchen, of the City of Kwang-tchau-fu.

* * *

Nearly five hundred years ago the Celestially August, the Son of Heaven, Yong-Lo, of the "Illustrious" or Ming dynasty, commanded the worthy official Kouan-Yu that he should have a bell made of such size that the sound thereof might be heard for one hundred *li.* And he further ordained that the voice of the bell should be strengthened with brass, and deepened with gold, and sweetened with silver; and that the face and the great lips of it should be graven with blessed sayings from the sacred books, and that it should be suspended in the centre of the imperial capital, to sound through all the many-colored ways of the City of Pe-King.

Therefore the worthy mandarin Kouan-Yu assembled the master-molders and the renowned bellsmiths of the empire, and all men of great repute and cunning in foundry work; and they measured the materials for

the alloy, and treated them skilfully, and prepared the molds, the fires, the instruments, and the monstrous melting-pot for fusing the metal. And they labored exceedingly, like giants, neglecting only rest and sleep and the comforts of life; toiling both night and day in obedience to Kouan-Yu, and striving in all things to do the behest of the Son of Heaven.

But when the metal had been cast, and the earthen mold separated from the glowing casting, it was discovered that, despite their great labor and ceaseless care, the result was void of worth; for the metals had rebelled one against the other—the gold had scorned alliance with the brass, the silver would not mingle with the molten iron. Therefore the molds had to be once more prepared, and the fires rekindled, and the metal remelted, and all the work tediously and toilsomely repeated. The Son of Heaven heard and was angry, but spake nothing.

A second time the bell was cast, and the result was even worse. Still the metals obstinately refused to blend one with the other; and there was no uniformity in the bell, and the sides of it were cracked and fissured, and the lips of it were slagged and split asunder; so that all the labor had to be repeated even a third time, to the great dismay of Kouan-Yu. And when the Son of Heaven heard these things, he was angrier than before; and sent his messenger to Kouan-Yu with a letter, written upon lemon-colored silk and sealed with the seal of the dragon, containing these words:

"From the Mighty Yong-Lo, the Sublime Tait-

Sung, the Celestial and August, whose reign is called 'Ming,' to Kouan-Yu the Fuh-yin: Twice thou hast betrayed the trust we have deigned graciously to place in thee; if thou fail a third time in fulfilling our command, thy head shall be severed from thy neck. Tremble, and obey!"

* * *

Now, Kouan-Yu had a daughter of dazzling loveliness whose name—Ko-Ngai—was ever in the mouths of poets, and whose heart was even more beautiful than her face. Ko-Ngai loved her father with such love that she had refused a hundred worthy suitors rather than make his home desolate by her absence; and when she had seen the awful yellow missive, sealed with the Dragon-Seal, she fainted away with fear for her father's sake. And when her senses and her strength returned to her, she could not rest or sleep for thinking of her parent's danger, until she had secretly sold some of her jewels, and with the money so obtained had hastened to an astrologer, and paid him a great price to advise her by what means her father might be saved from the peril impending over him. So the astrologer made observations of the heavens, and marked the aspect of the Silver Stream (which we call the Milky Way), and examined the signs of the Zodiac—the *Hwang-tao,* or Yellow Road —and consulted the table of the Five *Hin,* or Principles of the Universe, and the mystical books of the alchemists. And after a long silence, he made answer to her, saying: "Gold and brass will never meet in wedlock, silver and iron never will embrace, until the

flesh of a maiden be melted in the crucible; until the blood of a virgin be mixed with the metals in their fusion." So Ko-Ngai returned home sorrowful at heart; but she kept secret all that she had heard, and told no one what she had done.

* * *

At last came the awful day when the third and last effort to cast the great bell was to be made; and Ko-Ngai, together with her waiting woman, accompanied her father to the foundry, and they took their places upon a platform overlooking the toiling of the molders and the lava of liquefied metal. All the workmen wrought at their tasks in silence; there was no sound heard but the muttering of the fires. And the muttering deepened into a roar like the roar of typhoons approaching, and the blood-red lake of metal slowly brightened like the vermilion of a sunrise, and the vermilion was transmuted into a radiant glow of gold, and the gold whitened blindingly, like the silver face of a full moon. Then the workers ceased to feed the raving flame, and all fixed their eyes upon the eyes of Kouan-Yu; and Kouan-Yu prepared to give the signal to cast.

But ere ever he lifted his finger, a cry caused him to turn his head; and all heard the voice of Ko-Ngai sounding sharply sweet as a bird's song above the great thunder of the fires—*"For thy sake, O my father!"* And even as she cried, she leaped into the white flood of metal; and the lava of the furnace roared to receive her, and spattered monstrous flakes of flame to the roof, and burst over the verge of the earthen

crater, and cast up a whirling fountain of many-colored fires, and subsided quakingly, with lightnings and with thunders and with mutterings.

Then the father of Ko-Ngai, wild with his grief, would have leaped in after her, but that strong men held him back and kept firm grasp upon him until he had fainted away, and they could bear him like one dead to his home. And the serving-woman of Ko-Ngai, dizzy and speechless for pain, stood before the furnace, still holding in her hands a shoe, a tiny, dainty shoe, with embroidery of pearls and flowers—the shoe of her beautiful mistress that was. For she had sought to grasp Ko-Ngai by the foot as she leaped, but had only been able to clutch the shoe, and the pretty shoe came off in her hand; and she continued to stare at it like one gone mad.

. . . . . .

But in spite of all these things, the command of the Celestial and August had to be obeyed, and the work of the molders to be finished, hopeless as the result might be. Yet the glow of the metal seemed purer and whiter than before; and there was no sign of the beautiful body that had been entombed therein. So the ponderous casting was made; and lo! when the metal had become cool, it was found that the bell was beautiful to look upon and perfect in form, and wonderful in color above all other bells. Nor was there any trace found of the body of Ko-Ngai; for it had been totally absorbed by the precious alloy, and blended with the well-blended brass and gold, with the intermingling of the silver and the iron. And when they

sounded the bell, its tones were found to be deeper and mellower and mightier than the tones of any other bell, reaching even beyond the distance of one hundred *li,* like a pealing of summer thunder; and yet also like some vast voice uttering a name, a woman's name, the name of Ko-Ngai.

* * *

And still, between each mighty stroke there is a long low moaning heard; and ever the moaning ends with a sound of sobbing and of complaining, as though a weeping woman should murmur, *"Hiai!"* And still, when the people hear that great golden moan they keep silence, but when the sharp, sweet shuddering comes in the air, and the sobbing of *"Hiai!"* then, indeed, do all the Chinese mothers in all the many-colored ways of Pe-King whisper to their little ones: *"Listen! that is Ko-Ngai crying for her shoe! That is Ko-Ngai calling for her shoe!"*

A SUCCESSFUL FAILURE

BY H. C. BUNNER

Henry Cuyler Bunner (born in Oswego, N. Y., 1855; died 1896) was one of the most gifted editors of his generation. From its early days until shortly before his death he was the editor of "Puck," developing it from a mere free lance in journalism to a position where it became a real force in American politics as well as a vehicle of clever verse and fiction. None of its editorials or contributions excelled those of the editor. His was a rare temperamental personality—his short stories reflect it, and few authors have succeeded in inspiring a more affectionate appreciation in the minds of their readers. His extraordinary versatility is exemplified in the parody given herewith. "There are two kinds of parody," says Brander Matthews—"one is a mere imitation of the external form, and is commonly inexpensive and tiresome; the other is rarer and calls for an evocation of the internal spirit. In this Bunner excelled."

New York, June 12th, 1887.

My Dear Mr. Stockton:

When I asked you to write a story for "The Midsummer Puck," you told me that your engagements forbade your making a promise. I told you that if you did not write your story for me, I should write it for you. You told me that that arrangement satisfied you completely. You never wrote your story. I did. This is it. And I am sincerely yours,

H. C. Bunner.

A SUCCESSFUL FAILURE

BY H. C. BUNNER

IT was on the 27th of January, a number of years ago, that I sent my petition for a vacation to the Board of Directors of the Royal Toronto and Extra-Colonial Fire Insurance Company, in whose Albany Branch office I was employed. It was received, and forwarded to Toronto, by the Secretary, who was an English Canadian, very stiff and formal, and given to the worship of English manners and of English ways of doing everything. I do not think you could have wounded him more than by telling him that something he had done was not strictly English. There were four other clerks, besides myself, who were as much like the head of the office as it was possible for them to make themselves after many years of assiduous practice. The letter paper of the Company bore the principal English flag crossed with the other English flag on a background of the coat-of-arms of England, and the flag of the United States peeped modestly out of the middle distance. I was the only American in the office except the office-boy, and I often said to my wife that if it were not for the office-boy, I should feel myself an exile in a foreign land.

Although I had not been married long, I had been in

Copyright, 1887, by Keppler & Schwarzmann.

the employ of the Royal Toronto and Extra-Colonial Fire Insurance Company for nearly twelve years; and although I had been promised a vacation of one week every year when I entered the Company's employ, it had never been found convenient to let me off, except for three days when I got married.

This seemed to me to be unjust, and my wife thought so too. She suggested that, as we had a little money laid up, and as we both wanted to go to Europe, and as the Company owed us at least eleven weeks of vacation, less the three days of our honeymoon, making just ten weeks and four days, I should ask the Board of Directors to compound for this time and for such time as would be due me in the four years that were to elapse before I should receive my promotion to a senior clerkship in the regular course, by giving me one long vacation of four months, deducting the three days.

I have observed that my wife's advice is generally sound, and so I drew up the petition, and, as I have said, presented it on the 27th of January.

I got an acknowledgment the next week, saying that the petition would be considered at the next semi-annual meeting of the Board, on the 15th of June, and the decision would be promulgated in September. It was in the fall, therefore, that I received a reply, informing me, in language that I thought somewhat cold, that, in spite of the extraordinary character of my request, the Board had concluded to grant it, and that I was to have three months' leave of absence, less three days, beginning on the 15th of the following

June. I suppose they took off one month on account of the extraordinary character of my request.

When I told my wife, which I did as soon as I reached home that evening, she was overjoyed, and flung her arms about my neck.

"We will not mind about the month less, dear," she said: "perhaps we might have got tired of it if we had stayed so long."

It is my wife's habit to look on what I might call the consolatory and compensatory side of things, and I consider this a very happy faculty, although, perhaps, difficult of acquirement except under those agreeable circumstances when it is not needed.

"But," she said, when her first transports were subsided, "if we are going to Europe, we ought to know the European languages, and neither of us speaks anything but English."

I reminded her that I had learned a little Latin at school; but she observed, quite justly, that my Latin would be of very little use to us unless we were traveling in Roumania, where it is still spoken, or unless we were going to associate with the people in and about the Vatican, which it was hardly likely we should, especially as we attended the Congregational Church.

"Now, French," she continued, "is the universal language. It is spoken in all the courts, and I presume also among the common people. You know that all the nice dishes on the bills of fare are in French, so I suppose the waiters speak it fluently."

Her arguments appeared to me unanswerable, and

I cast my deciding vote for the French language. The next question was how to acquire it. We could not afford to employ a French teacher without encroaching upon the money we had laid up for our traveling expenses, and as we lived in a remote suburb of Albany, we could hardly expect a good teacher to come out to us in the evening except at an exorbitant price. We thought, also, it would be much more agreeable to study by ourselves, without having a stranger about, who might not be interested in our trip, which was all we cared to talk about just then.

We discussed the various methods of learning a foreign language, and finally decided upon the Natural Method. That is, we determined, instead of beginning with the grammar and the rules of syntax, to learn by building up simple sentences, exactly as a child learns his mother-tongue. We had both observed that while a child finds little difficulty in learning to speak well and freely the language which he hears spoken about him, he may pass many years of labor in making himself master of a language which he learns by rule. My wife knew of a girl, in the school where she was educated, who studied French for three years, and then was unable to write it with real fluency and correctness.

The next day I bought, for reference, a French-and-English grammar and a French-and-English pronouncing dictionary. We spent most of the first week in learning how to pronounce according to the dictionary, and then we began our course of mutual instruction.

We took turns at being teacher and pupil. First I

would sit down, and my wife, with the dictionary in her hand, would indicate some object in the room, and would speak the French name of it, which I would repeat until I thought I had it fixed in my mind. Then she would name other objects until she thought I had forgotten the first one, when she would suddenly recall it to my attention, asking me if I knew what it was. If I failed to tell her correctly, she took my place, and I became the teacher. Thus we made a sort of game of it, which we found extremely enjoyable.

Our progress, however, was not as rapid as we could have wished; and finally I pointed out to my wife that a child learns because his mind is free from other impressions, and receives only the impression of the moment, while we were naturally thinking of other matters—of the to-morrow's dinner or of the temperature of the room, for example. It was evident, I told her, that to succeed we must reduce our minds to the blankness of childhood—in fact, that the one of us who was being taught must, for the time, imagine himself or herself (as the case might be) actually to be a child. I admitted that this would require an effort of the imagination; but I saw no way to avoid it.

After some thought, my wife came to our rescue with a scheme which I at first ridiculed, but at last accepted provisionally. The scheme was to stimulate the imagination by the influence of material surroundings. The one of us who was playing the pupil was to sit on a chair elevated on a box or a trunk, to wear

some garment suggestive of infancy, and to possess his or her mind with the idea of being a baby. At first, as I have mentioned, I did not like the plan; but I consented to try it.

My wife began at once to lay out the garment. At first she said she would send to a neighbor for the pattern; but on mature reflection she abandoned this idea, and sent to New York for a dressmaker's guide, or something of the sort. By multiplying ten times the figures on the pattern there shown, she was enabled to construct a white cotton frock, or slip, as she told me it would be called, which buttoned in the back and had ruffling at the neck and down the shoulders. It was nine feet long, and fitted me snugly and my wife very loosely. It was supplied with two sets of bows to pin on the shoulders—a pink set to be used when I wore it, and a blue set for my wife.

When she first saw me attired in this garment, and seated upon a dining-room chair placed upon a soap-box, my wife laughed heartily; but I could not wholly agree with her that there was any occasion for laughter, for when she came to try it on, I thought she looked unusually pretty in it.

I found, indeed, that the dress was of great practical value. Before I had worn it ten minutes, I felt that my mind was reduced to the vacuity of a child's. In this way we readily learned *un table, le vase, le chaise*, and many other words. At the end of a month, with the aid of the Grammar, we began on short and easy sentences. We both felt that our progress was entirely owing to the slip.

"I shouldn't like to have any one know of it, though," said my wife.

. . . . . .

On the afternoon of the 14th of June, I did not go home from the office, but joined my wife at a small and modest hotel where I had taken a room for the day. We were to leave on the nine o'clock boat, and as we lived so far out of town, we had thought it better to dismiss our one servant, close up our little house, and wait in Albany till the time for the boat to start. We had no intimate friends in the town, and so we indulged ourselves in the luxury of a room at a hotel for the few hours we had to wait. Our tickets had been taken for Liverpool by the "Carnival of Venice," a steamer belonging to a small but well-conducted line, for we could not afford to travel, even second class, by any one of the great lines. The "Carnival" was a good, stanch, seaworthy vessel, and had been recommended to us as thoroughly comfortable, although her cargo was mostly freight, and she carried only a few passengers. The Captain was reputed to be a most agreeable man.

Our baggage had gone down the day before, and we only carried our hand-bags, in which we had put all that we thought necessary for a night's travel. We were to go on board the steamer as soon as we arrived at New York, which would be at six o'clock in the morning. The "Carnival" was to sail at seven sharp, taking advantage of the outgoing tide.

I have said that we carried only our hand-bags; but I should have added that we had also a package con-

taining a can of deviled ham, a can of crystallized lemonade, a can-opener, a knife and a loaf of bread. It had occurred to us that we might be too late for breakfast on the "Carnival," and that, by this means, whatever might be the accidents of travel, we had at hand a plentiful supply of food in the most compact form. As my wife remarked, we had sandwiches and lemonade reduced to their original principles.

After a very good dinner at the hotel, we took a French lesson in our room, to pass away the time, packed our hand-bags neatly, and, as it was a fine summer night, began to stroll leisurely down toward the steamer dock, which lay at some distance from the quiet hostelry which we had chosen. But before we had gone a block, my wife stopped suddenly, and I saw that she was agitated.

"I am sure I left it on the bed," she said, as though to herself.

I asked her what she meant, and she told me hastily that she had just remembered leaving our slip on the bed, where she had thrown it at the close of the French lesson.

"Very well," I said: "let us leave it there. We probably would not use it much on the steamer, and you can make a new one when we get to Liverpool."

"Oh, no," she replied, excitedly, "that would never do. We would not get used to a new one. And, besides, what will people think if they find it?"

I offered to go for it; but she preferred to go herself.

"I should attract attention if I stood here in the street with these two satchels," she explained, "and

there is no reason why both of us should go back to the hotel. Now I can slip back and get the chambermaid to open the door for me, and I can be back here in a few moments."

She hurried off, and returned in even less time than I had expected, carrying the slip rolled up in a newspaper.

"It was lucky I went back," she said. "Do you know that we left the room door open? And just as I got there a man was walking down the corridor, and trying all the doors. I suppose he was what they call a hotel sneak thief."

"Very likely," said I; "and if this had been a diamond necklace instead of a cotton slip, he would have stolen it."

"I'm glad I have not a diamond necklace," said my wife.

We were the first people on board the steamer, and we amused ourselves, after putting our baggage in our stateroom, by leaning over the rail and watching the other passengers come over the gangplank. Most of them came very late, giving themselves just time to catch the boat, and arriving very hot and uncomfortable. Indeed, two men came rushing down the dock together just as the gangplank was drawn in, and had to jump to reach the deck. My wife and I agreed that we would make it a rule to be ahead of time in our traveling, rather than behind.

Later in the evening, when my wife had retired to our stateroom, and I was smoking a cigar on the upper deck, a man came leisurely up and took his position

close by me. I was leaning on the rail, and looking at the gray hills past which we were rapidly slipping.

I recognized the stranger as one of the two men who had almost lost the boat. He was a large man, with a heavy black mustache. I could not see very well in the moonlight; but I thought the mustache was dyed. He wore a flashy watch-chain and a bright-colored necktie, and his clothes were somewhat extravagant in their cut. I thought he looked like a theatrical man, or perhaps an auctioneer.

After a little while, the stranger addressed me with some remark about the beauty of the scenery, and then began to tell me the names of the mountains we were passing, and of the towns whose lights we could see along the water's edge.

"You see," he said, "I know about these things, for my business requires me to travel a great deal. I am in the show business."

I did not know what to say to this, so I merely remarked that it must be a very interesting business.

"It *is* a very interesting business," he said, "and my branch of it is especially interesting. I am a purveyor of freaks."

My curiosity was now aroused, and I asked him to tell me exactly what was the business of a purveyor of freaks.

"A freak," he said, "is a curiosity, a live curiosity of any sort, such as a bearded lady, a five-legged cow or a living skeleton. They are so called because they are frequently referred to as freaks of nature, in the lectures that are delivered about them. Some of my

freaks are happy discoveries; but most of them, such as fat women, living skeletons, and bearded ladies, I manufacture. I select likely subjects, and put them through a strictly scientific course of training, calculated to make them perfect specialties. As there are a great many dime museums and as the number is increasing, I am kept pretty busy."

I thought that it must be a profitable business, as well as an interesting one, and I said so to the stranger, who turned and looked me sharply, and I thought suspiciously, in the face.

"It *is* a profitable business," he said, "when I am not troubled with thieves. But when a man's freaks are stolen from him—yes, stolen—you can not call his business profitable, can you?"

I said I thought that under such circumstances a business might be called anything but profitable.

"I have just lost," he said in a somewhat loud and excited tone of voice, "one of the most valuable freaks I have ever had—a natural freak—a fat child, weighing two hundred and forty-nine pounds."

He seemed very much moved by emotion, and I said I was sure it must have been a heavy loss to him.

He looked at me as if he had some doubt as to whether I was speaking seriously, and continued:

"That theft was not only dishonest, but it was cruel. She was stolen from the hotel in my absence. Her name is Amanda Belasco. She is only three years old, and she weighs two hundred and forty-nine pounds. She lives on the bottle exclusively, and she has to have her milk mixed at a certain strength—

one part of milk to four of water. She can not stir hand or foot to help herself. Think of taking that child away from her natural parents and guardians, whom I have under salary, and exposing her to the chance of indigestion and death. She needs, when in a normal state of health, three gallons and a half a day. The man who abducted that child is a villain, sir. Think of it!"

I thought of it, and it seemed to me that he must be a very great villain indeed. A man who steals an ordinary small baby, weighing perhaps ten or eleven pounds, is generally considered a villain, and I felt that a man who would steal two hundred and forty-nine pounds of infant must proportionately surpass him in iniquity. I told the stranger so; but he paid no attention to me.

"If there is a law in the land," he said, "I will punish that man." He paused a moment and then added, very mysteriously, it seemed to me:

"I will leave you to think of that."

He turned away and walked toward the cabin door; but as he reached it he looked over his shoulder and said sternly:

"My name is Dockshaw."

I did not care what his name was, and I was greatly puzzled by his manner, and as I could make nothing of it, I thought it best to go to bed, which I did.

We arose early the next morning, in order to be on board of the "Carnival of Venice" in good season. As soon as we were dressed, we went on deck, and I was surprised to see my acquaintance of the night before

standing by the gangplank that led from the steamboat to the wharf, engaged in earnest conversation with his friend, who also had a black mustache and a bright-colored necktie. I was surprised, because it was only seven o'clock, and breakfast was not yet ready on board the steamboat.

I was still more surprised, however, when the friend approached me and asked permission to speak to me privately. When I stepped aside with him he said to me in a low tone:

"I am a detective from Albany, and you are my prisoner. Will you come quietly with me, or shall I call a New York policeman and give you in charge? I have one waiting on the wharf."

"But for what—" I stammered—"for what am I arrested?"

"For the theft," he replied, sternly, "of Mr. Dockshaw's fat infant."

I saw it all, with mortification and annoyance. It was that wretched slip which Mr. Dockshaw had noticed in our room at the hotel, and which he had supposed must belong to the mammoth infant. Mr. Dockshaw, then, was my wife's sneak thief. I explained, as briefly as I could, the situation; but when I had finished, the detective and Mr. Dockshaw, who had joined us, shook their heads.

"It is a very good story," said Mr. Dockshaw; "but it is too much like what I hear in my own line of business."

"Very well," I answered, for I was now provoked, "you may arrest me; but if you cause me to lose my

ship, I shall recover damages from you for my passage money and the loss of my holiday, as I can easily prove my innocence. But if you will go with me to the New York office of my company, I can at once establish my respectability."

After some discussion, Mr. Dockshaw accepted this proposition, and I informed my wife of what had happened, and told her to wait on the steamboat until I should return. At first she was alarmed, but presently took a more hopeful view of the matter.

"Think how much worse it would be," she observed, "if you were really guilty."

I remembered that Mr. Weatherwick, the manager of our New York branch, whom I knew quite well, was a methodical and assiduous business man, and was always at his desk by eight o'clock, and often earlier, so I proceeded at once, with my two companions, to the company's office. They were evidently much impressed by the place, for it was a large marble building, old-fashioned, but of notable solidity and respectability. The porter was sweeping out the office, and none of the clerks were on hand; but he told us that Mr. Weatherwick would soon be in. It was nearly eight o'clock, however, before he arrived.

Mr. Weatherwick was accustomed to command many subordinates, and he had, although a small man, a tone of precision and determination which evidently had a great effect upon Mr. Dockshaw and the detective. He was not long, with the help of the general reports of the Albany branch (which were always transmitted in duplicate to the sister establishment), in

convincing them that I was not the sort of man to filch a two-hundred-and-fifty-pound baby, even if I had ever desired so large and voracious an addition to my family.

When this was made clear to Mr. Dockshaw, he murmured a hasty apology, and started for the door.

"Hold on," I said, "this will not do. It is now ten minutes past eight and the 'Carnival of Venice' has certainly sailed. My tickets, which are return tickets for two, are of no use to me. Even if the steamer people would allow me to use them now, there is no boat on their line for a month, which would give me only two weeks in Europe."

It should be remembered that this was a number of years ago, when only the fastest steamers made the passage in fourteen days, and three weeks was a good trip for a boat like the "Carnival of Venice."

"You must," I continued, "pay for tickets for my wife and myself by some other line, or I shall remain in New York and sue you."

Upon this a discussion ensued, which was conducted with considerable acrimony, until Mr. Weatherwick interposed.

"The arrest was a mistake," he said to Mr. Dockshaw, "but you must do what you can to save this gentleman from any consequent annoyance. Now you would have to pay several hundred dollars for the tickets; but you can hire a tug to overtake the steamer for twenty-five or thirty dollars. The 'Carnival of Venice' is a slow boat, and may easily be caught by a lively tug before she reaches Sandy Hook."

This suggestion was gratefully received by Mr. Dockshaw, and after I had signed a promise not to hold him further responsible for any detention, we started for the riverside. Before I left, however, Mr. Weatherwick drew me to one side, and said:

"I do not wish to interfere in your private affairs; but, as an officer of the company, I would advise you to prosecute any further studies of foreign languages you may intend to make without the aid of underwear."

I remembered that Mr. Weatherwick was not a family man; so I did not correct him; but thanked him, and set off for the river.

When we got to the wharf, we inquired of the policeman where we could find a tug.

"You are in luck," he answered: "there is a steam-tug lying alongside now, which will start in a few minutes for Fire Island, to assist in getting a wreck off the sands. She is one of the fastest tugs in the bay, and I will introduce you to her captain, who is a friend of mine."

While Mr. Dockshaw was making a bargain with the captain, I went on the steamboat, and found my wife, who was delighted at my return; and in a short time we were both seated, with our hand-bags in our laps, on the deck of the "John B. Smiler."

We saw several ocean steamers as we puffed swiftly down the bay; but nothing resembling the "Carnival of Venice." We were sure of this, for they were all going the other way. After an hour or two, and while we were looking at a long, low strip of land, with a

lighthouse at the end, which we had just passed, Captain Smiler came up to us and told us that we had reached Sandy Hook, and that the "Carnival of Venice" was nowhere to be seen.

When we had got over our first disappointment, we observed that the captain had gone below, and that the "John B. Smiler" was still steaming on, with the land on one side, and the open sea on the other. I sought out the captain, and suggested that he should take us back to New York; but to this he roughly demurred.

It was not his fault, he said, that he had failed to catch the steamer; and he had his engagement at Fire Island, and was going there. The most he would do to accommodate us was to set us down at Kilper's. Kilper, he said, kept a sportsman's tavern at the end of Jamaica Bay.

I consulted with my wife, and we agreed that there was no better course to pursue. Our European trip was a failure even before it began, as my wife remarked. Fate had decreed that we should get no further than Kilper's, and when the captain put us ashore, and we saw Kilper himself sitting in the doorway of a tumble-down frame inn on a bare sandbank, we concluded that if the discomforts of our journey were to increase in the proportion already established, as we got further and further out into the world, it was well that our outing should terminate at Kilper's.

Kilper was not at all glad to see us. I do not think he had ever been glad to see anybody. This disinclination to sociability and hospitality was quite strongly marked, and it seemed to us that it qualified Kilper

rather for a hermit than for an innkeeper, whose profession is generally supposed to be of a genial character.

Kilper told us that his inn was not open for the season, and that he had no bed for us, and no food in the house. We believed this last statement, for from Kilper's appearance we judged that food was a secondary consideration to him, so long as he had whiskey in the house; and it was evident that there was whiskey.

The next question was: how to get back to New York? At first Kilper seemed to think that the only way was for us to walk; and he did not know how far it was, or what road to take. At last he remembered, when my wife took him in hand, that he had a brother who lived on the inland side of Jamaica Bay, and who also kept an inn. This inn differed from the inn of the first Kilper in being open all the year around. If we wanted to row ourselves across the bay, in one of the boats of the first Kilper, of which he had a number, the second Kilper would probably let us have a team to take us to the railroad. It would cost us one dollar to hire a boat, and we might leave the boat with the fraternal Kilper.

We accepted this offer, for the reason that no other course was open to us; and my wife thought that it would be delightful to anchor our boat in the shadow of the first clump of trees we came to, and make our luncheon on sandwiches and lemonade. We were ravenously hungry, having had no breakfast, and having been in the open air since seven o'clock. It was now past one. Perhaps, my wife further suggested, we might find a cooling spring near the shore, with the

waters of which we might make our lemonade. I had not much faith in the opportune appearance of the cooling spring, and so I prevailed upon Kilper to lend us a stone jug of water.

Kilper gave us elaborate directions as to the course to pursue to reach the abode of the other Kilper, and then he took us down to the shore, and established us in a large flat-bottomed boat, such as is used by sportsmen.

When we shoved off, and put out into the water, we found ourselves somewhat puzzled, for Kilper had spoken of our crossing the bay; but we could see no bay. There was a multitude of islands, and there was water between them; but that, according to the school geographies, does not constitute a bay. If the islands had been in the middle of an ocean, they would have been an archipelago; but as they were, so to speak, inland, we felt at a loss where to consider ourselves, in a geographical sense.

Kilper's directions, however, were specific, and as I pulled steadily along we looked for a convenient place to land, for we were hungry.

It was necessary, in following the directions we had received, to row nearly half way around one of the larger islands, which did not seem to be so much an island as a sort of thick swamp, with clumps of brush here and there. Between two of these clumps my wife noticed a peculiar opening into the marsh, as if a small canal had been made through the marsh-grass. Into this she proposed that we should turn.

"Who knows?" she said, "perhaps it may lead to

some pleasant place where we may sit down and eat a comfortable meal."

I turned the boat in, although I had not much faith in my wife's theory; but after rowing a hundred yards or so we came upon a real island, covered with grass and bushes. We had not seen it from outside, because the tall reeds and brush hid it from sight. We landed at once, and, after pulling the boat safely up on the beach, we walked through the bushes toward the interior of the island, carrying our satchels with us.

In a short time we came in sight of a small hut or cabin, evidently very recently built; but apparently empty. We peeped in at the door, which was open, and saw that it was composed of two rooms, a kitchen and a sleeping room, and that it was inhabited, for there was a bunk in which the bed was made up, and there was a fire in the kitchen stove. It all looked very neat and cosey, and we decided that we would search at once for the owners, and ask them if they could not give us something to eat and drink more satisfying than sandwiches and lemonade in their original principles. My wife was greatly delighted at the prospect. "Perhaps," she said, "they will even take us to board. Since our European trip must be given up, we might as well be here, where it is cool and pretty; and you would have a good chance to finish your novel."

I had been writing a novel for some years; but I had never got it near enough to completion to send to a publisher; and I had understood that publishers had a prejudice against accepting an unfinished work.

As my wife was speaking we turned the corner of the hut, and came upon a man busily at work upon a boat. He was at work; but he was not building the boat, which was already built, nor repairing her. In fact, he seemed to be trying to put her in need of repairs. He had a wooden mallet, with which he was beating the paint off her, and hammering dents in her sides. When he saw us, he appeared a good deal startled, and somewhat angrily inquired what we wanted.

"We want," I said in a dignified manner, "to know if we can have some luncheon at your house."

"Well, you can't," he replied, "now you know."

"But we have brought our luncheon with us," I returned, falling back upon the lemonade and sandwiches.

"Well," he said, "take it away with you," and he turned his back on us and went on hammering at the boat.

Discouraged by this rude reception of a perfectly proper inquiry, we moved away; but before we had got very far my wife stopped me.

"Don't you know who he is?" she asked.

"No," I replied, severely, "I do not know who he is, and, from what I have seen of his manners, I shall not cultivate his acquaintance."

"Why," she went on, without noticing my tone, "I remember him perfectly. He is Captain James Pringleberry, the Great International Sea Voyager, who left Albany last month to cross the Atlantic in a boat fourteen feet long. He has shaved off his big beard,

and he is not in sailor clothes; but I know it is he. Don't you recollect how we went down to see him off, and how they gave him a celebration on the wharf?"

As soon as my wife said this a great flood of light burst upon me, and I went back promptly to the man.

"You are Pringleberry," I said, "and I am going to New York to expose you."

He turned as white as a ghost and looked thoroughly discomfited.

"Don't be too hard on me, Captain," he began; and, seeing perhaps that I looked pleased at being called Captain, he went on hurriedly:

"I will tell you the whole truth and throw myself upon your mercy. This whole affair is got up for exhibition purposes. I left Albany in this little boat, sailed around here, and put in. I shall stay here the whole summer hammering paint off my boat, and washing her with sulphuric acid and walnut juice to make her look weather-beaten. Arrangements have been made with my brother, who is captain of a brig bound for Oporto, to have me reported spoken in mid-ocean. At the time when I ought to arrive on the other side, a man answering to my description, with a boat like this, will sail into Southampton from a hiding-place near by, and will exhibit himself through England. Then a return trip will be arranged in the same way, and I will sail out from here in my weather-beaten boat, and enter New York as a hero. Then I shall show myself all through the country, and lecture on the dangers of the trip."

"Then you do not really cross the ocean?" I inquired.

"I wouldn't go on them waves, sir," he replied, "for two hundred and fifty dollars a wave."

"Do you want to take us to board here for the summer?" I asked, in a suggestive manner.

Captain Pringleberry looked at me very carefully, and finally concluded that he did.

We had a good luncheon, prepared by Pringleberry, and also a good dinner; and we slept very comfortably in the hut; Pringleberry, who was something of a carpenter, having put up a bunk for himself in the kitchen. The next day he sent Kilper's brother, who, he said, "stood in" with him, to New York for our trunks, which we thought might have been left behind by the "Carnival of Venice." They had been left behind; the passenger list of the "Carnival" being small, our absence had been observed, and the steamer had waited an hour for us. In fact, she had gone down the Bay some time after we left on the "John B. Smiler," which probably accounted for our not having seen her.

We were not, however, so sorry for this mishap as we might have been. The steamship company gave us back the price of our tickets, less ten per cent, and we had a very pleasant time on the island. The mosquitoes bothered us somewhat; but we had excellent bathing and fishing. My wife found enough to occupy her in taking care of the house, or hut, and in helping me with my novel, on which I made great progress, for the place was really retired and quiet.

I gave my afternoons to my novel, and I noticed that Pringleberry was also busy with writing. He worked hard; but did not seem to cover many pages. One afternoon he came to me and said, in a deferential way:

"I judge you are a literary man."

I could not say that I was; but I had not moral courage enough to deny the imputation. Pringleberry went on:

"I am writing my lecture to be delivered on my return trip. I am not a literary man, and I find great difficulty in making it sound right. I wish you would go over it and give me the benefit of your suggestions. I am to lecture in the principal dime museums, and Mr. Dockshaw, who employs me, is very particular. He will be here shortly to see how I am getting on."

"I know Mr. Dockshaw," I said, "and I shall be happy to revise your lecture."

I soon found that Pringleberry's lecture could be improved by various grammatical corrections, and by the addition of certain imaginative details. In the end, I threw his manuscript away, and wrote a wholly new lecture for him, with which he seemed to be greatly pleased.

When Mr. Dockshaw arrived, he did not appear overjoyed at seeing me; but as soon as he had read my lecture he changed his mind.

"This is what I have been looking for," he said: "I will pay one hundred dollars for every lecture you will write like this."

As I had a great deal of time to spare from my

novel, I accepted this liberal offer, and wrote a number of lectures for Mr. Dockshaw, for which he paid promptly. I went further than this, and invented a number of freaks to fit lectures which I had in my mind. Some of my new freaks were great popular successes. The Red-Headed Albino and the Mildewed Hairy Man from the Mines of Siberia were among my great successes.

Thus the summer passed away. When we went back to Albany, at the expiration of my leave of absence, I presented myself to the Secretary of the Insurance Company, who asked me, very kindly, if I had had a pleasant trip to Europe. I answered that I had had a pleasant trip. He remarked that England was a great country.

I replied that it was a great country, and offered him my resignation, explaining that I had found a line of business which paid me better than being a clerk in an insurance office. He accepted my resignation with much politeness, and expressed the hope that I would be more successful in my new business than I had been as a clerk in an insurance office.

My novel, which I had completed on the island, was published in the spring. It was accepted by the first publisher to whom I sent it. It was received, as I may say without immodesty, with a whirlwind of approbation. The press notices, of which there were many, spoke of it as a wonderfully witty and sharply satirical travesty on the old-fashioned conventional fiction, and praised it highly as a delicately humorous burlesque, the irony of which excused its extravagant

caricature of exaggerated sentiment. It was hailed as a masterpiece of caustic humor.

This was very gratifying, especially as the book sold so well that it enabled us to buy a nice house in the suburbs of Albany. Only one thing clouded our pleasure in these expressions of favorable opinion. The book, when I wrote it, was intended to be serious. My wife and I had both been deeply moved by the pathetic passages, when we read them over.

But then, as my wife said, perhaps it was as well that it was misunderstood, after all. "For you see," she said, "if you were a serious writer, you would have to write a better book next time, whereas a funny man can do anything he wants to. I should call it a very successful failure."

THE LIAR

BY HENRY JAMES

It is one of the obvious points of biographical criticism that Henry James, the novelist (born in New York, April 15, 1843), is as truly a scientific psychologist as is his brother, Professor William James, the eminent student of the human mind who holds a chair at Harvard University. In "The Liar" we have a searching study of congenital mendacity, the painter's art of portraiture, more penetrating than X-ray photography, being employed by the author to supply a skiagraph of the soul.

THE LIAR

BY HENRY JAMES

THE train was half an hour late and the drive from the station longer than he had supposed, so that when he reached the house its inmates had dispersed to dress for dinner and he was conducted straight to his room. The curtains were drawn in this asylum, the candles were lighted, the fire was bright, and when the servant had quickly put out his clothes the comfortable little place became suggestive—seemed to promise a pleasant house, a various party, talks, acquaintances, affinities, to say nothing of very good cheer. He was too occupied with his profession to pay many country visits, but he had heard people who had more time for them speak of establishments where "they do you very well." He foresaw that the proprietors of Stayes would do him very well. In his bedroom at a country house he always looked first at the books on the shelf and the prints on the walls; he considered that these things gave a sort of measure of the culture and even of the character of his hosts. Though he had but little time to devote to them on this occasion, a cursory inspection assured him that if the literature, as usual, was mainly American and humorous, the art consisted neither of the water-color studies of the children nor

Copyright, 1889, by Henry James, Jr.

of "goody" engravings. The walls were adorned with old-fashioned lithographs, principally portraits of country gentlemen with high collars and riding gloves: this suggested—and it was encouraging—that the tradition of portraiture was held in esteem. There was the customary novel of Mr. Le Fanu, for the bedside; the ideal reading in a country house for the hours after midnight. Oliver Lyon could scarcely forbear beginning it while he buttoned his shirt.

Perhaps that is why he not only found every one assembled in the hall when he went down, but perceived from the way the move to dinner was instantly made that they had been waiting for him. There was no delay, to introduce him to a lady, for he went out in a group of unmatched men, without this appendage. The men, straggling behind, sidled and edged as usual at the door of the dining-room, and the *dénouement* of this little comedy was that he came to his place last of all. This made him think that he was in a sufficiently distinguished company, for if he had been humiliated (which he was not) he could not have consoled himself with the reflection that such a fate was natural to an obscure, struggling young artist. He could no longer think of himself as very young, alas, and if his position was not so brilliant as it ought to be he could no longer justify it by calling it a struggle. He was something of a celebrity and he was apparently in a society of celebrities. This idea added to the curiosity with which he looked up and down the long table as he settled himself in his place.

It was a numerous party—five and twenty people;

rather an odd occasion to have proposed to him, as he thought. He would not be surrounded by the quiet that ministers to good work; however, it had never interfered with his work to see the spectacle of human life before him in the intervals. And though he did not know it, it was never quiet at Stayes. When he was working well he found himself in that happy state—the happiest of all for an artist—in which things in general contribute to the particular idea and fall in with it, help it on and justify it, so that he feels for the hour as if nothing in the world can happen to him, even if it come in the guise of disaster or suffering, that will not be an enhancement of his subject. Moreover there was an exhilaration (he had felt it before) in the rapid change of scene—the jump, in the dusk of the afternoon, from foggy London and his familiar studio to a centre of festivity in the middle of Hertfordshire and a drama half acted, a drama of pretty women and noted men and wonderful orchids in silver jars. He observed as a not unimportant fact that one of the pretty women was beside him: a gentleman sat on his other hand. But he went into his neighbors little as yet: he was busy looking out for Sir David, whom he had never seen and about whom he naturally was curious.

Evidently, however, Sir David was not at dinner, a circumstance sufficiently explained by the other circumstance which constituted our friend's principal knowledge of him—his being ninety years of age. Oliver Lyon had looked forward with great pleasure to the chance of painting a nonogenarian, and though

the old man's absence from table was something of a disappointment (it was an opportunity the less to observe him before going to work), it seemed a sign that he was rather a sacred and perhaps therefore an impressive relic. Lyon looked at his son with the greater interest—wondered whether the glazed bloom of his cheek had been transmitted from Sir David. That would be jolly to paint, in the old man—the withered ruddiness of a winter apple, especially if the eye were still alive and the white hair carried out the frosty look. Arthur Ashmore's hair had a midsummer glow, but Lyon was glad his commission had been to delineate the father rather than the son, in spite of his never having seen the one and of the other being seated there before him now in the happy expansion of liberal hospitality.

Arthur Ashmore was a fresh-colored, thick-necked English gentleman, but he was just not a subject; he might have been a farmer and he might have been a banker: you could scarcely paint him in characters. His wife did not make up the amount; she was a large, bright, negative woman, who had the same air as her husband of being somehow tremendously new: a sort of appearance of fresh varnish (Lyon could scarcely tell whether it came from her complexion or from her clothes), so that one felt she ought to sit in a gilt frame, suggesting reference to a catalogue or a price-list. It was as if she were already rather a bad though expensive portrait, knocked off by an eminent hand, and Lyon had no wish to copy that work. The pretty woman on his right was engaged with her

neighbor, and the gentleman on his other side looked shrinking and scared, so that he had time to lose himself in his favorite diversion of watching face after face. This amusement gave him the greatest pleasure he knew, and he often thought it a mercy that the human mask did interest him and that it was not less vivid than it was (sometimes it ran its success in this line very close), since he was to make his living by reproducing it. Even if Arthur Ashmore would not be inspiring to paint (a certain anxiety rose in him lest if he should make a hit with her father-in-law Mrs. Arthur should take it into her head that he had now proved himself worthy to *aborder* her husband); even if he had looked a little less like a page (fine as to print and margin) without punctuation, he would still be a refreshing, iridescent surface. But the gentleman four persons off—what was he? Would he be a subject, or was his face only the legible door-plate of his identity, burnished with punctual washing and shaving —the least thing that was decent that you would know him by? This face arrested Oliver Lyon: it struck him at first as very handsome. The gentleman might still be called young, and his features were regular: he had a plentiful, fair mustache that curled up at the ends, a brilliant, gallant, almost adventurous air, and a big shining breastpin in the midde of his shirt. He appeared a fine satisfied soul, and Lyon perceived that wherever he rested his friendly eye there fell an influence as pleasant as the September sun—as if he could make grapes and pears or even human affection ripen by looking at them. What was odd in him was a

certain mixture of the correct and the extravagant: as if he were an adventurer imitating a gentleman with rare perfection or a gentleman who had taken a fancy to go about with hidden arms. He might have been a dethroned prince or the war correspondent of a newspaper: he represented both enterprise and tradition, good manners and bad taste. Lyon at length fell into conversation with the lady beside him—they dispensed, as he had had to dispense at dinner parties before, with an introduction—by asking who this personage might be.

"Oh, he's Colonel Capadose, don't you know?" Lyon didn't know and he asked for further information. His neighbor had a sociable manner and evidently was accustomed to quick transitions; she turned from her other interlocutor with a methodical air, as a good cook lifts the cover of the next saucepan. "He has been a great deal in India—isn't he rather celebrated?" she inquired. Lyon confessed he had never heard of him, and she went on, "Well, perhaps he isn't; but he says he is, and if you think it, that's just the same, isn't it?"

"If *you* think it?"

"I mean if he thinks it—that's just as good, I suppose."

"Do you mean that he says that which is not?"

"Oh dear, no—because I never know. He is exceedingly clever and amusing—quite the cleverest person in the house, unless indeed you are more so. But that I can't tell yet, can I? I only know about the people I know; I think that's celebrity enough!"

"Enough for them?"

"Oh, I see you're clever. Enough for me! But I have heard of you," the lady went on. "I know your pictures; I admire them. But I don't think you look like them."

"They are mostly portraits," Lyon said; "and what I usually try for is not my own resemblance."

"I see what you mean. But they have much more color. And now you are going to do some one here?"

"I have been invited to do Sir David. I'm rather disappointed at not seeing him this evening."

"Oh, he goes to bed at some unnatural hour—eight o'clock or something of that sort. You know he's rather an old mummy."

"An old mummy?" Oliver Lyon repeated.

"I mean he wears half a dozen waistcoats, and that sort of thing. He's always cold."

"I have never seen him and never seen any portrait or photograph of him," Lyon said. "I'm surprised at his never having had anything done—at their waiting all these years."

"Ah, that's because he was afraid, you know; it was a kind of superstition. He was sure that if anything were done he would die directly afterward. He has only consented to-day."

"He's ready to die then?"

"Oh, now he's so old he doesn't care."

"Well, I hope I shan't kill him," said Lyon. "It was rather unnatural in his son to send for me."

"Oh, they have nothing to gain—everything is theirs already!" his companion rejoined, as if she took this

speech quite literally. Her talkativeness was systematic—she fraternized as seriously as she might have played whist. "They do as they like—they fill the house with people—they have *carte blanche*."

"I see—but there's still the title."

"Yes, but what is it?"

Our artist broke into laughter at this, whereat his companion stared. Before he had recovered himself she was scouring the plain with her other neighbor. The gentleman on his left at last risked an observation, and they had some fragmentary talk. This personage played his part with difficulty: he uttered a remark as a lady fires a pistol, looking the other way. To catch the ball Lyon had to bend his ear, and this movement led to his observing a handsome creature who was seated on the same side, beyond his interlocutor. Her profile was presented to him and at first he was only struck with its beauty; then it produced an impression still more agreeable—a sense of undimmed remembrance and intimate association. He had not recognized her on the instant only because he had so little expected to see her there; he had not seen her anywhere for so long, and no news of her ever came to him. She was often in his thoughts, but she had passed out of his life. He thought of her twice a week; that may be called often in relation to a person one has not seen for twelve years. The moment after he recognized her he felt how true it was that it was only she who could look like that: of the most charming head in the world (and this lady had it) there could never be a replica. She was leaning

forward a little; she remained in profile, apparently listening to some one on the other side of her. She was listening, but she was also looking, and after a moment Lyon followed the direction of her eyes. They rested upon the gentleman who had been described to him as Colonel Capadose—rested, as it appeared to him, with a kind of habitual, visible complacency. This was not strange, for the Colonel was unmistakably formed to attract the sympathetic gaze of woman; but Lyon was slightly disappointed that she could let *him* look at her so long without giving him a glance. There was nothing between them today and he had no rights, but she must have known he was coming (it was of course not such a tremendous event, but she could not have been staying in the house without hearing of it), and it was not natural that that should absolutely fail to affect her.

She was looking at Colonel Capadose as if she were in love with him—a queer accident for the proudest, most reserved of women. But doubtless it was all right, if her husband liked it or didn't notice it: he had heard indefinitely, years before, that she was married, and he took for granted (as he had not heard that she had become a widow) the presence of the happy man on whom she had conferred what she had refused to *him,* the poor art student at Munich. Colonel Capadose appeared to be aware of nothing, and this circumstance, incongruously enough, rather irritated Lyon than gratified him. Suddenly the lady turned her head, showing her full face to our hero. He was so prepared with a greeting that he instantly

smiled, as a shaken jug overflows; but she gave him no response, turned away again and sank back in her chair. All that her face said in that instant was, "You see I'm as handsome as ever." To which he mentally subjoined, "Yes, and as much good it does me!" He asked the young man beside him if he knew who that beautiful being was—the fifth person beyond him. The young man leaned forward, considered, and then said, "I think she's Mrs. Capadose."

"Do you mean his wife—that fellow?" And Lyon indicated the subject of the information given him by his other neighbor.

"Oh, is he Mr. Capadose?" said the young man, who appeared very vague. He admitted his vagueness and explained it by saying that there were so many people and he had come only the day before. What was definite to Lyon was that Mrs. Capadose was in love with her husband; so that he wished more than ever that he had married her.

"She's very faithful," he found himself saying three minutes later to the lady on his right. He added that he meant Mrs. Capadose.

"Ah, you know her then?"

"I knew her once upon a time—when I was living abroad."

"Why then were you asking me about her husband?"

"Precisely for that reason. She married after that —I didn't even know her present name."

"How then do you know it now?"

"This gentleman has just told me—he appears to know."

"I didn't know he knew anything," said the lady, glancing forward.

"I don't think he knows anything but that."

"Then you have found out for yourself that she is faithful. What do you mean by that?"

"Ah, you mustn't question me—I want to question you," Lyon said. "How do you all like her here?"

"You ask too much! I can only speak for myself. I think she's hard."

"That's only because she's honest and straightforward."

"Do you mean I like people in proportion as they deceive?"

"I think we all do, so long as we don't find them out," Lyon said. "And then there's something in her face—a sort of Roman type, in spite of her having such an English eye. In fact, she's English down to the ground; but her complexion, her low forehead and that beautiful close little wave in her dark hair makes her look like a glorified *contadina*."

"Yes, and she always sticks pins and daggers into her head, to increase that effect. I must say I like her husband better: he is so clever."

"Well, when I knew her there was no comparison that could injure her. She was altogether the most delightful thing in Munich."

"In Munich?"

"Her people lived there; they were not rich—in pursuit of economy, in fact, and Munich was very cheap. Her father was the younger son of some noble house; he had married a second time and had a lot

of little mouths to feed. She was the child of the first wife and she didn't like her stepmother, but she was charming to her little brothers and sisters. I once made a sketch of her as Werther's Charlotte, cutting bread and butter while they clustered all round her. All the artists in the place were in love with her, but she wouldn't look at 'the likes' of us. She was too proud—I grant you that; but she wasn't stuck up nor young ladyish; she was simple and frank and kind about it. She used to remind me of Thackeray's Ethel Newcome. She told me she must marry well: it was the one thing she could do for her family. I suppose you would say that she *has* married well."

"She told *you?*" smiled Lyon's neighbor.

"Oh, of course I proposed to her, too. But she evidently thinks so herself!" he added.

When the ladies left the table the host as usual bade the gentlemen draw together, so that Lyon found himself opposite to Colonel Capadose. The conversation was mainly about the "run," for it had apparently been a great day in the hunting field. Most of the gentlemen communicated their adventures and opinions, but Colonel Capadose's pleasant voice was the most audible in the chorus. It was a bright and fresh but masculine organ, just such a voice as, to Lyon's sense, such a "fine man" ought to have had. It appeared from his remarks that he was a very straight rider, which was also very much what Lyon would have expected. Not that he swaggered, for his allusions were very quietly and casually made; but they were all too dangerous experiments and close

shaves. Lyon perceived after a little that the attention paid by the company to the Colonel's remarks was not in direct relation to the interest they seemed to offer; the result of which was that the speaker, who noticed that *he* at least was listening, began to treat him as his particular auditor and to fix his eyes on him as he talked. Lyon had nothing to do but to look sympathetic and assent—Colonel Capadose appeared to take so much sympathy and assent for granted. A neighboring squire had had an accident; he had come a cropper in an awkward place—just at the finish—with consequences that looked grave. He had struck his head; he remained insensible, up to the last accounts: there had evidently been concussion of the brain. There was some exchange of views as to his recovery—how soon it would take place or whether it would take place at all; which led the Colonel to confide to our artist across the table that *he* shouldn't despair of a fellow even if he didn't come round for weeks—for weeks and weeks and weeks—for months, almost for years. He leaned forward; Lyon leaned forward to listen, and Colonel Capadose mentioned that he knew from personal experience that there was really no limit to the time one might lie unconscious without being any the worse for it. It had happened to him in Ireland years before; he had been pitched out of a dogcart, had turned a sheer somersault and landed on his head. They thought he was dead; but he wasn't; they carried him first to the nearest cabin, where he lay for some days with the pigs, and then to an inn in a neighboring town—it was a near thing

they didn't put him under ground. He had been completely insensible—without a ray of recognition of any human thing—for three whole months; had not a glimmer of consciousness of any blessed thing. It was touch and go to that degree that they couldn't come near him, they couldn't feed him, they could scarcely look at him. Then one day he had opened his eyes—as fit as a flea!

"I give you my honor it had done me good—it rested my brain." He appeared to intimate that with an intelligence so active as his these periods of repose were providential. Lyon thought his story very striking, but he wanted to ask him whether he had not shammed a little—not in relating it, but in keeping so quiet. He hesitated, however, in time to imply a doubt—he was so impressed with the tone in which Colonel Capadose said that it was the turn of a hair that they hadn't buried him alive. That had happened to a friend of his in India—a fellow who was supposed to have died of jungle fever—they clapped him into a coffin. He was going on to recite the further fate of this unfortunate gentleman when Mr. Ashmore made a move and every one got up to adjourn to the drawing-room.

Lyon noticed that by this time no one was heeding what his new friend said to him. They came round on either side of the table and met while the gentlemen dawdled before going out.

"And do you mean that your friend was literally buried alive?" asked Lyon, in some suspense.

Colonel Capadose looked at him a moment, as if he

had already lost the thread of the conversation. Then his face brightened—and when it brightened it was doubly handsome. "Upon my soul, he was chucked into the ground!"

"And was he left there?"

"He was left there till I came and hauled him out."

"*You* came?"

"I dreamed about him—it's the most extraordinary story; I heard him calling to me in the night. I took upon myself to dig him up. You know there are people in India—a kind of beastly race, the ghouls—who violate graves. I had a sort of presentiment that they would get at him first. I rode straight, I can tell you; and, by Jove, a couple of them had just broken ground! Crack—crack, from a couple of barrels, and they showed me their heels, as you may believe. Would you credit that I took him out myself? The air brought him to and he was none the worse. He has got his pension—he came home the other day; he would do anything for me."

"He called to you in the night?" said Lyon, much startled.

"That's the interesting point. Now *what was it?* It wasn't his ghost, because he wasn't dead. It wasn't himself, because he couldn't. It was something or other! You see, India's a strange country—there's an element of the mysterious: the air is full of things you can't explain."

They passed out of the dining-room, and Colonel Capadose, who went among the first, was separated from Lyon; but a minute later, before they reached the

drawing-room, he joined him again. "Ashmore tells me who you are. Of course I have often heard of you—I'm very glad to make your acquaintance; my wife used to know you."

"I'm glad she remembers me. I recognized her at dinner and I was afraid she didn't."

"Ah, I daresay she was ashamed," said the Colonel, with indulgent humor.

"Ashamed of me?" Lyon replied, in the same key.

"Wasn't there something about a picture? Yes; you painted her portrait."

"Many times," said the artist; "and she may very well have been ashamed of what I made of her."

"Well, I wasn't, my dear sir; it was the sight of that picture, which you were so good as to present to her, that made me first fall in love with her."

"Do you mean that one with the children—cutting bread and butter?"

"Bread and butter? Bless me, no—vine leaves and a leopard skin—a kind of Bacchante."

"Ah, yes," said Lyon; "I remember. It was the first decent portrait I painted. I should be curious to see it to-day."

"Don't ask her to show it to you—she'll be mortified!" the Colonel exclaimed.

"Mortified?"

"We parted with it—in the most disinterested manner," he laughed. "An old friend of my wife's—her family had known him intimately when they lived in Germany—took the most extraordinary fancy to it: the Grand Duke of Silberstadt-Schreckenstein, don't

you know? He came out to Bombay while we were there and he spotted your picture (you know he's one of the greatest collectors in Europe), and made such eyes at it that, upon my word—it happened to be his birthday—she told him he might have it, to get rid of him. He was perfectly enchanted—but we miss the picture."

"It is very good of you," Lyon said. "If it's in a great collection—a work of my incompetent youth—I am infinitely honored."

"Oh, he has got it in one of his castles; I don't know which—you know he has so many. He sent us, before he left India—to return the compliment—a magnificent old vase."

"That was more than the thing was worth," Lyon remarked.

Colonel Capadose gave no heed to this observation; he seemed to be thinking of something. After a moment he said, "If you'll come and see us in town she'll show you the vase." And as they passed into the drawing-room he gave the artist a friendly propulsion. "Go and speak to her; there she is—she'll be delighted."

Oliver Lyon took but a few steps into the wide saloon; he stood there a moment looking at the bright composition of the lamplit group of fair women, the single figures, the great setting of white and gold, the panels of old damask, in the centre of each of which was a single celebrated picture. There was a subdued lustre in the scene; and an air as of the shining trains of dresses tumbled over the carpet. At the fur-

thest end of the room sat Mrs. Capadose, rather isolated; she was on a small sofa, with an empty place beside her. Lyon could not flatter himself she had been keeping it for him; her failure to respond to his recognition at table contradicted that, but he felt an extreme desire to go and occupy it. Moreover, he had her husband's sanction; so he crossed the room, stepping over the tails of gowns, and stood before his old friend.

"I hope you don't mean to repudiate me," he said.

She looked up at him with an expression of unalloyed pleasure. "I am so glad to see you. I was delighted when I heard you were coming."

"I tried to get a smile from you at dinner—but I couldn't."

"I didn't see—I didn't understand. Besides, I hate smirking and telegraphing. Also I'm very shy—you won't have forgotten that. Now we can communicate comfortably." And she made a better place for him on the little sofa. He sat down and they had a talk that he enjoyed, while the reason for which he used to like her so came back to him, as well as a good deal of the very same old liking. She was still the least spoiled beauty he had ever seen, with an absence of coquetry or any insinuating art that seemed almost like an omitted faculty; there were moments when she struck her interlocutor as some fine creature from an asylum—a surprising deaf mute or one of the operative blind. Her noble pagan head gave her privileges that she neglected, and when people were admiring her brow she was wondering whether there were a good

fire in her bedroom. She was simple, kind and good; inexpressive, but not inhuman or stupid. Now and again she dropped something that had a sifted, selected air—the sound of an impression at first hand. She had no imagination, but she had added up her feelings, some of her reflections, about life. Lyon talked of the old days in Munich, reminded her of incidents, pleasures and pains, asked her about her father and the others; and she told him in return that she was so impressed with his own fame, his brilliant position in the world, that she had not felt very sure he would speak to her or that his little sign at table was meant for her. This was plainly a perfectly truthful speech—she was incapable of any other—and he was affected by such humility on the part of a woman whose grand line was unique. Her father was dead; one of her brothers was in the navy and the other on a ranch in America; two of her sisters were married and the youngest was just coming out and very pretty. She didn't mention her stepmother. She asked him about his own personal history, and he said that the principal thing that had happened to him was that he had never married.

"Oh, you ought to," she answered. "It's the best thing."

"I like that—from you!" he returned.

"Why not from me? I am very happy."

"That's just why I can't be. It's cruel of you to praise your state. But I have had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of your husband. We had a good bit of talk in the other room."

"You must know him better—you must know him really well," said Mrs. Capadose.

"I am sure that the further you go the more you find. But he makes a fine show, too."

She rested her good gray eyes on Lyon. "Don't you think he's handsome?"

"Handsome and clever and entertaining. You see I'm generous."

"Yes; you must know him well," Mrs. Capadose repeated.

"He has seen a great deal of life," said her companion.

"Yes, we have been in so many places. You must see my little girl. She's nine years old—she's too beautiful."

"You must bring her to my studio some day—I should like to paint her."

"Ah, don't speak of that," said Mrs. Capadose. "It reminds me of something so distressing."

"I hope you don't mean when *you* used to sit to me—though that may well have bored you."

"It's not what you did—it's what we have done. It's a confession I must make—it's a weight on my mind! I mean about that beautiful picture you gave me—it used to be so much admired. When you come to see me in London (I count on your doing that very soon) I shall see you looking all round. I can't tell you I keep it in my own room because I love it so, for the simple reason—" And she paused a moment.

"Because you can't tell wicked lies," said Lyon.

"No, I can't. So before you ask for it—"

"Oh, I know you parted with it—the blow has already fallen," Lyon interrupted.

"Ah, then you have heard? I was sure you would! But do you know what we got for it? Two hundred pounds."

"You might have got much more," said Lyon, smiling.

"That seemed a great deal at the time. We were in want of the money—it was a good while ago, when we first married. Our means were very small then, but fortunately that has changed rather for the better. We had the chance; it really seemed a big sum, and I am afraid we jumped at it. My husband had expectations which have partly come into effect, so that now we do well enough. But meanwhile the picture went."

"Fortunately the original remained. But do you mean that two hundred was the value of the vase?" Lyon asked.

"Of the vase?"

"The beautiful old Indian vase—the Grand Duke's offering."

"The Grand Duke?"

"What's his name? — Silberstadt-Schreckenstein. Your husband mentioned the transaction."

"Oh, my husband," said Mrs. Capadose; and Lyon saw that she colored a little.

Not to add to her embarrassment, but to clear up the ambiguity, which he perceived the next moment he had better have left alone, he went on: "He tells me it's now in his collection."

"In the Grand Duke's? Ah, you know its reputa-

tion? I believe it contains treasures." She was bewildered, but she recovered herself, and Lyon made the mental reflection that for some reason which would seem good when he knew it the husband and the wife had prepared different versions of the same incident. It was true that he did not exactly see Everina Brant preparing a version; that was not her line of old, and indeed it was not in her eyes to-day. At any rate, they both had the matter too much on their conscience. He changed the subject, said Mrs. Capadose must really bring the little girl. He sat with her some time longer and thought—perhaps it was only a fancy—that she was rather absent, as if she were annoyed at their having been even for a moment at cross-purposes. This did not prevent him from saying to her at the last, just as the ladies began to gather themselves together to go to bed: "You seem much impressed, from what you say, with my renown and my prosperity, and you are so good as greatly to exaggerate them. Would you have married me if you had known that I was destined to success?"

"I did know it."

"Well, I didn't."

"You were too modest."

"You didn't think so when I proposed to you."

"Well, if I had married you I couldn't have married *him*—and he's so nice," Mrs. Capadose said. Lyon knew she thought it—he had learned that at dinner—but it vexed him a little to hear her say it. The gentleman designated by the pronoun came up, amid the prolonged handshaking for good-night, and Mrs.

Capadose remarked to her husband as she turned away, "He wants to paint Amy."

"Ah, she's a charming child, a most interesting little creature," the Colonel said to Lyon. "She does the most remarkable things."

Mrs. Capadose stopped, in the rustling procession that followed the hostess out of the room. "Don't tell him, please don't," she said.

"Don't tell him what?"

"Why, what she does. Let him find out for himself." And she passed on.

"She thinks I swagger about the child—that I bore people," said the Colonel. "I hope you smoke." He appeared ten minutes later in the smoking-room, in a brilliant equipment, a suit of crimson foulard covered with little white spots. He gratified Lyon's eye, made him feel that the modern age has its splendor too and its opportunities for costume. If his wife was an antique, he was a fine specimen of the period of color: he might have passed for a Venetian of the sixteenth century. They were a remarkable couple, Lyon thought, and as he looked at the Colonel standing in bright erectness before the chimney-piece while he emitted great smoke-puffs, he did not wonder that Everina could not regret she had not married *him*. All the gentlemen collected at Stayes were not smokers, and some of them had gone to bed. Colonel Capadose remarked that there probably would be a smallish muster, they had had such a hard day's work. That was the worst of a hunting-house—the men were so sleepy after dinner; it was devilish stupid for the ladies, even

for those who hunted themselves—for women were so extraordinary, they never showed it. But most fellows revived under the stimulating influences of the smoking-room, and some of them, in this confidence, would turn up yet. Some of the grounds of their confidence—not all of them—might have been seen in a cluster of glasses and bottles on a table near the fire, which made the great salver and its contents twinkle sociably. The others lurked as yet in various improper corners of the minds of the most loquacious. Lyon was alone with Colonel Capadose for some moments before their companions, in varied eccentricities of uniform, straggled in, and he perceived that this wonderful man had but little loss of vital tissue to repair.

They talked about the house, Lyon having noticed an oddity of construction in the smoking-room; and the Colonel explained that it consisted of two distinct parts, one of which was of very great antiquity. They were two complete houses in short, the old one and the new, each of great extent and each very fine in its way. The two formed together an enormous structure—Lyon must make a point of going all over it. The modern portion had been erected by the old man when he bought the property; oh, yes, he had bought it, forty years before—it hadn't been in the family: there hadn't been any particular family for it to be in. He had had the good taste not to spoil the original house—he had not touched it beyond what was just necessary for joining it on. It was very curious indeed—a most irregular, rambling, mysterious pile, where they every now and then discovered a walled-up

room or a secret staircase. To his mind it was essentially gloomy, however; even the modern additions, splendid as they were, failed to make it cheerful. There was some story about a skeleton having been found years before, during some repairs, under a stone slab of the floor of one of the passages; but the family were rather shy of its being talked about. The place they were in was of course in the old part, which contained, after all, some of the best rooms: he had an idea it had been the primitive kitchen, half modernized at some intermediate period.

"My room is in the old part, too, then—I'm very glad," Lyon said. "It's very comfortable and contains all the latest conveniences, but I observed the depth of the recess of the door and the evident antiquity of the corridor and staircase—the first short one—after I came out. That paneled corridor is admirable; it looks as if it stretched away, in its brown dimness (the lamps didn't seem to me to make much impression on it), for half a mile."

"Oh, don't go to the end of it!" exclaimed the Colonel, smiling.

"Does it lead to the haunted room?" Lyon asked.

His companion looked at him a moment. "Ah, you know about that?"

"No, I don't speak from knowledge, only from hope. I have never had any luck—I have never stayed in a dangerous house. The places I go to are always as safe as Charing Cross. I want to see—whether there is, the regular thing. *Is* there a ghost here?"

"Of course there is—a rattling good one."

"And have you seen him?"

"Oh, don't ask me what *I've* seen—I should tax your credulity. I don't like to talk of these things. But there are two or three as bad—that is, as good! —rooms as you'll find anywhere."

"Do you mean in my corridor?" Lyon asked.

"I believe the worst is at the far end. But you would be ill-advised to sleep there."

"Ill-advised?"

"Until you've finished your job. You'll get letters of importance the next morning, and you'll take the 10.20."

"Do you mean I will invent a pretext for running away?"

"Unless you are braver than almost any one has ever been. They don't often put people to sleep there, but sometimes the house is so crowded that they have to. The same thing always happens—ill-concealed agitation at the breakfast table and letters of the greatest importance. Of course it's a bachelor's room, and my wife and I are at the other end of the house. But we saw the comedy three days ago—the day after we got here. A young fellow had been put there—I forget his name—the house was so full—and the usual consequence followed. Letters at breakfast — an awfully queer face—an urgent call to town—so very sorry his visit was cut short. Ashmore and his wife looked at each other, and off the poor devil went."

"Ah, that wouldn't suit me; I must paint my picture," said Lyon. "But do they mind your speaking

of it? Some people who have a good ghost are very proud of it, you know."

What answer Colonel Capadose was on the point of making to this inquiry our hero was not to learn, for at that moment their host had walked into the room accompanied by three or four gentlemen. Lyon was conscious that he was partly answered by the Colonel's not going on with the subject. This, however, on the other hand, was rendered natural by the fact that one of the gentlemen appealed to him for an opinion on a point under discussion, something to do with the everlasting history of the day's run. To Lyon himself Mr. Ashmore began to talk, expressing his regret at having had so little direct conversation with him as yet. The topic that suggested itself was naturally that most closely connected with the motive of the artist's visit. Lyon remarked that it was a great disadvantage to him not to have had some preliminary acquaintance with Sir David—in most cases he found that so important. But the present sitter was so far advanced in life that there was doubtless no time to lose. "Oh, I can tell you all about him," said Mr. Ashmore; and for half an hour he told him a good deal. It was very interesting as well as very eulogistic, and Lyon could see that he was a very nice old man, to have endeared himself so to a son who was evidently not a gusher. At last he got up—he said he must go to bed if he wished to be fresh for his work in the morning. To which his host replied, "Then you must take your candle; the lights are out; I don't keep my servants up."

In a moment Lyon had his glimmering taper in hand, and as he was leaving the room (he did not disturb the others with a good-night; they were absorbed in the lemon-squeezer and the soda-water cork) he remembered other occasions on which he had made his way to bed alone through a darkened country house; such occasions had not been rare, for he was almost always the first to leave the smoking-room. If he had not stayed in houses conspicuously haunted, he had, none the less (having the artistic temperament), sometimes found the great black halls and staircases rather "creepy": there had been often a sinister effect, to his imagination, in the sound of his tread in the long passages or the way the winter moon peeped into tall windows on landings. It occurred to him that if houses without supernatural pretensions could look so wicked at night, the old corridors of Stayes would certainly give him a sensation. He didn't know whether the proprietors were sensitive; very often, as he had said to Colonel Capadose, people enjoyed the impeachment. What determined him to speak, with a certain sense of the risk, was the impression that the Colonel told queer stories. As he had his hand on the door he said to Arthur Ashmore, "I hope I shan't meet any ghosts."

"Any ghosts?"

"You ought to have some—in this fine old part."

"We do our best, but *que voulez-vous?*" said Mr. Ashmore. "I don't think they like the hot-water pipes."

"They remind them too much of their own climate?

Henry James

But haven't you a haunted room—at the end of my passage?"

"Oh, there are stories—we try to keep them up."

"I should like very much to sleep there," Lyon said.

"Well, you can move there to-morrow if you like."

"Perhaps I had better wait till I have done my work."

"Very good; but you won't work there, you know. My father will sit to you in his own apartments."

"Oh, it isn't that; it's the fear of running away, like that gentleman three days ago."

"Three days ago? What gentleman?" Mr. Ashmore asked.

"The one who got urgent letters at breakfast and fled by the 10.20. Did he stand more than one night?"

"I don't know what you are talking about. There was no such gentleman—three days ago."

"Ah, so much the better," said Lyon, nodding good-night and departing. He took his course, as he remembered it, with his wavering candle, and, though he encountered a great many grewsome objects, safely reached the passage out of which his room opened. In the complete darkness it seemed to stretch away still further, but he followed it, for the curiosity of the thing, to the end. He passed several doors with the name of the room painted upon them, but he found nothing else. He was tempted to try the last door—to look into the room of evil

fame; but he reflected that this would be indiscreet, since Colonel Capadose handled the brush—as a raconteur—with such freedom. There might be a ghost and there might not; but the Colonel himself, he inclined to think, was the most mystifying figure in the house.

II

Lyon found Sir David Ashmore a capital subject and a very comfortable sitter into the bargain. Moreover he was a very agreeable old man, tremendously puckered, but not in the least dim; and he wore exactly the furred dressing-gown that Lyon would have chosen. He was proud of his age, but ashamed of his infirmities, which, however, he greatly exaggerated and which did not prevent him from sitting there as submissive as if portraiture in oils had been a branch of surgery. He demolished the legend of his having feared the operation would be fatal, giving an explanation which pleased our friend much better. He held that a gentleman should be painted but once in his life—that it was eager and fatuous to be hung up all over the place. That was good for women, who made a pretty wall-pattern; but the male face didn't lend itself to decorative repetition. The proper time for the likeness was at the last, when the whole man was there—you got the totality of his experience. Lyon could not reply that that period was not a real compendium—you had to allow so for leakage; for there had been no crack in Sir David's crystallization. He spoke of his portrait as a plain map of the country, to be consulted by his children in a case of uncertainty.

A proper map could be drawn up only when the country had been traveled. He gave Lyon his mornings till luncheon, and they talked of many things, not neglecting, as a stimulus to gossip, the people in the house.

Now that he did not "go out," as he said, he saw much less of the visitors at Stayes: people came and went whom he knew nothing about, and he liked to hear Lyon describe them. The artist sketched with a fine point and did not caricature, and it usually befell that when Sir David did not know the sons and daughters he had known the fathers and mothers. He was one of those terrible old gentlemen who are a repository of antecedents. But in the case of the Capadose family, at whom they arrived by an easy stage, his knowledge embraced two, or even three, generations. General Capadose was an old crony, and he remembered his father before him. The general was rather a smart soldier, but in private life of too speculative a turn—always sneaking into the City to put his money into some rotten thing. He married a girl who brought him something and they had half a dozen children. He scarcely knew what had become of the rest of them, except that one was in the Church and had found preferment—wasn't he Dean of Rockingham? Clement, the fellow who was at Stayes, had some military talent; he had served in the East, he had married a pretty girl. He had been at Eton with his son, and he used to come to Stayes in his holidays. Lately, coming back to England, he had turned up with his wife again; that was before he—the old

man—had been put to grass. He was a taking dog, but he had a monstrous foible.

"A monstrous foible?" said Lyon.

"He's a thumping liar."

Lyon's brush stopped short, while he repeated, for somehow the formula startled him, "A thumping liar?"

"You are very lucky not to have found it out."

"Well, I confess I have noticed a romantic tinge—"

"Oh, it isn't always romantic. He'll lie about the time of day, about the name of his hatter. It appears there are people like that."

"Well, they are precious scoundrels," Lyon declared, his voice trembling a little with the thought of what Everina Brant had done with herself.

"Oh, not always," said the old man. "This fellow isn't in the least a scoundrel. There is no harm in him and no bad intention; he doesn't steal nor cheat nor gamble nor drink; he's very kind—he sticks to his wife, is fond of his children. He simply can't give you a straight answer."

"Then everything he told me last night, I suppose, was mendacious: he delivered himself of a series of the stiffest statements. They stuck, when I tried to swallow them, but I never thought of so simple an explanation."

"No doubt he was in the vein," Sir David went on. "It's a natural peculiarity—as you might limp or stutter or be left-handed. I believe it comes and goes, like intermittent fever. My son tells me that his friends usually understand it and don't haul him up—for the sake of his wife."

"Oh, his wife—his wife!" Lyon murmured, painting fast.

"I daresay she's used to it."

"Never in the world, Sir David. How can she be used to it?"

"Why, my dear sir, when a woman's fond!—And don't they mostly handle the long bow themselves? They are connoisseurs—they have a sympathy for a fellow-performer."

Lyon was silent a moment; he had no ground for denying that Mrs. Capadose was attached to her husband. But after a little he rejoined: "Oh, not this one! I knew her years ago—before her marriage; knew her well and admired her. She was as clear as a bell."

"I like her very much," Sir David said, "but I have seen her back him up."

Lyon considered Sir David for a moment, not in the light of a model. "Are you very sure?"

The old man hesitated; then he answered, smiling, "You're in love with her."

"Very likely. God knows I used to be!"

"She must help him out—she can't expose him."

"She can hold her tongue," Lyon remarked.

"Well, before you probably she will."

"That's what I am curious to see." And Lyon added, privately, "Mercy on us, what he must have made of her!" He kept this reflection to himself, for he considered that he had sufficiently betrayed his state of mind with regard to Mrs. Capadose. None the less it occupied him now immensely, the question

of how such a woman would arrange herself in such a predicament. He watched her with an interest deeply quickened when he mingled with the company; he had had his own troubles in life, but he had rarely been so anxious about anything as he was now to see what the loyalty of a wife and the infection of an example would have made of an absolutely truthful mind. Oh, he held it as immutably established that, whatever other women might be prone to do, she, of old, had been perfectly incapable of a deviation. Even if she had not been too simple to deceive she would have been too proud; and if she had not had too much conscience she would have had too little eagerness. It was the last thing she would have endured or condoned—the particular thing she would not have forgiven. Did she sit in torment while her husband turned his somersaults, or was she now too so perverse that she thought it a fine thing to be striking at the expense of one's honor? It would have taken a wondrous alchemy—working backward, as it were—to produce this latter result. Besides these two alternatives (that she suffered tortures in silence and that she was so much in love that her husband's humiliating idiosyncrasy seemed to her only an added richness—a proof of life and talent), there was still the possibility that she had not found him out, that she took his false pieces at his own valuation. A little reflection rendered this hypothesis untenable; it was too evident that the account he gave of things must repeatedly have contradicted her own knowledge. Within an hour or two of his meeting them Lyon had

seen her confronted with that perfectly gratuitous invention about the profit they had made off his early picture. Even then indeed she had not, so far as he could see, smarted, and—but for the present he could only contemplate the case.

Even if it had not been interfused, through his uneradicated tenderness for Mrs. Capadose, with an element of suspense, the question would still have presented itself to him as a very curious problem, for he had not painted portraits during so many years without becoming something of a psychologist. His inquiry was limited for the moment to the opportunity that the following three days might yield, as the Colonel and his wife were going on to another house. It fixed itself largely, of course, upon the Colonel too—this gentleman was such a rare anomaly. Moreover it had to go on very quickly. Lyon was too scrupulous to ask other people what they thought of the business—he was too afraid of exposing the woman he once loved. It was probable also that light would come to him from the talk of the rest of the company: the Colonel's queer habit, both as it affected his own situation and as it affected his wife, would be a familiar theme in any house in which he was in the habit of staying. Lyon had not observed in the circles in which he visited any marked abstention from comment on the singularities of their members. It interfered with his progress that the Colonel hunted all day, while he plied his brushes and chatted with Sir David; but a Sunday intervened and that partly made it up. Mrs. Capadose fortunately did not hunt, and

when his work was over she was not inaccessible. He took a couple of longish walks with her (she was fond of that), and beguiled her at tea into a friendly nook in the hall. Regard her as he might, he could not make out to himself that she was consumed by a hidden shame; the sense of being married to a man whose word had no worth was not, in her spirit, so far as he could guess, the canker within the rose. Her mind appeared to have nothing on it but its own placid frankness, and when he looked into her eyes (deeply, as he occasionally permitted himself to do), they had no uncomfortable consciousness. He talked to her again and still again of the dear old days—reminded her of things that he had not (before this reunion) the least idea that he remembered. Then he spoke to her of her husband, praised his appearance, his talent for conversation, professed to have felt a quick friendship for him and asked (with an inward audacity at which he trembled a little) what manner of man he was. "What manner?" said Mrs. Capadose. "Dear me, how can one describe one's husband? I like him very much."

"Ah, you have told me that already!" Lyon exclaimed, with exaggerated ruefulness.

"Then why do you ask me again?" She added in a moment, as if she were so happy that she could afford to take pity on him, "He is everything that's good and kind. He's a soldier—and a gentleman—and a dear! He hasn't a fault—he has great ability."

"Yes; he strikes one as having great ability. But of course I can't think him a dear."

"I don't care what you think him!" said Mrs. Capadose, looking, it seemed to him, as she smiled, handsomer than he had ever seen her. She was either deeply cynical or still more deeply impenetrable, and he had little prospect of winning from her the intimation that he longed for—some hint that it had come over her that after all she had better have married a man who was not a by-word for the most contemptible, the least heroic, of vices. Had she not seen—had she not felt—the smile go round when her husband executed some especially characteristic conversational caper? How could a woman of her quality endure that day after day, year after year, except by her quality's altering? But he would believe in the alteration only when he should have heard *her* lie. He was fascinated by his problem and yet half exasperated, and he asked himself all kinds of questions. Did she not lie, after all, when she let his falsehoods pass without a protest? Was not her life a perpetual complicity, and did she not aid and abet him by the simple fact that she was not disgusted with him? Then again perhaps she *was* disgusted, and it was the mere desperation of her pride that had given her an inscrutable mask. Perhaps she protested in private, passionately; perhaps every night, in their own apartments, after the day's hideous performance, she made him the most scorching scene. But if such scenes were of no avail and he took no more trouble to cure himself, how could she regard him, and after so many years of marriage too, with the perfectly artless complacency that Lyon had surprised in her in

the course of the first day's dinner? If our friend had not been in love with her he could have taken the diverting view of the Colonel's delinquencies; but as it was they turned to the tragical in his mind, even while he had a sense that his solicitude might also have been laughed at.

The observation of these three days showed him that if Capadose was an abundant he was not a malignant liar, and that his fine faculty exercised itself mainly on subjects of small direct importance. "He is the liar platonic," he said to himself; "he is disinterested, he doesn't operate with a hope of gain or with a desire to injure. It is art for art and he is prompted by the love of beauty. He has an inner vision of what might have been, of what ought to be, and he helps on the good cause by the simple substitution of a *nuance*. He paints, as it were, and so do I!" His manifestations had a considerable variety, but a family likeness ran through them, which consisted mainly of their singular futility. It was this that made them offensive; they incumbered the field of conversation, took up valuable space, converted it into a sort of brilliant sun-shot fog. For a fib told under pressure a convenient place can usually be found, as for a person who presents himself with an author's order at the first night of a play. But the supererogatory lie is the gentleman without a voucher or a ticket who accommodates himself with a stool in the passage.

In one particular Lyon acquitted his successful rival; it had puzzled him that irrepressible as he was he had not got into a mess in the service. But he perceived

that he respected the service—that august institution was sacred from his depredations. Moreover, though there was a great deal of swagger in his talk, it was, oddly enough, rarely swagger about his military exploits. He had a passion for the chase, he had followed it in far countries, and some of his finest flowers were reminiscences of lonely danger and escape. The more solitary the scene the bigger of course the flower. A new acquaintance, with the Colonel, always received the tribute of a bouquet: that generalization Lyon very promptly made. And this extraordinary man had inconsistencies and unexpected lapses—lapses into flat veracity. Lyon recognized what Sir David had told him, that his aberrations came in fits or periods—that he would sometimes keep the truce of God for a month at a time. The muse breathed upon him at her pleasure; she often left him alone. He would neglect the finest openings and then set sail in the teeth of the breeze. As a general thing he affirmed the false rather than denied the true; yet this proportion was sometimes strikingly reversed. Very often he joined in the laugh against himself—he admitted that he was trying it on and that a good many of his anecdotes had an experimental character. Still he never completely retracted nor retreated—he dived and came up in another place. Lyon divined that he was capable at intervals of defending his position with violence, but only when it was a very bad one. Then he might easily be dangerous—then he would hit out and become calumnious. Such occasions would test his wife's equanimity—Lyon would have liked to see her there.

In the smoking-room and elsewhere the company, so far as it was composed of his familiars, had a hilarious protest always at hand; but among the men who had known him long his rich tone was an old story, so old that they had ceased to talk about it, and Lyon did not care, as I have said, to elicit the judgment of those who might have shared his own surprise.

The oddest thing of all was that neither surprise nor familiarity prevented the Colonel's being liked; his largest drafts on a sceptical attention passed for an overflow of life and gayety—almost of good looks. He was fond of portraying his bravery and used a very big brush, and yet he was unmistakably grave. He was a capital rider and shot, in spite of his fund of anecdote illustrating these accomplishments: in short, he was very nearly as clever and his career had been very nearly as wonderful as he pretended. His best quality, however, remained that indiscriminate sociability which took interest and credulity for granted and about which he bragged least. It made him cheap, it made him even in a manner vulgar; but it was so contagious that his listener was more or less on his side as against the probabilities. It was a private reflection of Oliver Lyon's that he not only lied, but made one feel one's self a bit of a liar, even (or especially) if one contradicted him. In the evening, at dinner and afterward, our friend watched his wife's face to see if some faint shade or spasm never passed over it. But she showed nothing, and the wonder was that when he spoke she almost always listened. That was her pride: she wished not to be even suspected of

not facing the music. Lyon had none the less an importunate vision of a veiled figure coming the next day in the dusk to certain places to repair the Colonel's ravages, as the relatives of kleptomaniacs punctually call at the shops that have suffered from their pilferings.

"I must apologize, of course it wasn't true, I hope no harm is done, it is only his incorrigible—" Oh, to hear that woman's voice in that deep abasement! Lyon had no nefarious plan, no conscious wish to practice upon her shame or her loyalty; but he did say to himself that he should like to bring her round to feel that there would have been more dignity in a union with a certain other person. He even dreamed of the hour when, with a burning face, she would ask *him* not to take it up. Then he should be almost consoled—he would be magnanimous.

Lyon finished his picture and took his departure, after having worked in a glow of interest which made him believe in his success, until he found he had pleased every one, especially Mr. and Mrs. Ashmore, when he began to be sceptical. The party at any rate changed: Colonel and Mrs. Capadose went their way. He was able to say to himself, however, that his separation from the lady was not so much an end as a beginning, and he called on her soon after his return to town. She had told him the hours she was at home—she seemed to like him. If she liked him, why had she not married him, or at any rate why was she not sorry she had not? If she was sorry she concealed it too well. Lyon's curiosity on this point may strike the

reader as fatuous, but something must be allowed to a disappointed man. He did not ask much after all; not that she should love him to-day or that she should allow him to tell her that he loved her, but only that she should give him some sign she was sorry. Instead of this, for the present, she contented herself with exhibiting her little daughter to him. The child was beautiful and had the prettiest eyes of innocence he had ever seen: which did not prevent him from wondering whether she told horrid fibs. This idea gave him much entertainment—the picture of the anxiety with which her mother would watch as she grew older for the symptoms of heredity. That was a nice occupation for Everina Brant! Did she lie to the child herself about her father—was that necessary, when she pressed her daughter to her bosom, to cover up his tracks? Did he control himself before the little girl —so that she might not hear him say things she knew to be other than he said? Lyon doubted this: his genius would be too strong for him, and the only safety for the child would be in her being too stupid to analyze. One couldn't judge yet—she was too young. If she should grow up clever she would be sure to tread in his steps—a delightful improvement in her mother's situation! Her little face was not shifty, but neither was her father's big one: so that proved nothing.

Lyon reminded his friends more than once of their promise that Amy should sit to him, and it was only a question of his leisure. The desire grew in him to paint the Colonel also—an operation from which he promised himself a rich private satisfaction. He

would draw him out, he would set him up in that totality about which he had talked with Sir David, and none but the initiated would know. They, however, would rank the picture high, and it would be indeed six rows deep—a masterpiece of subtle characterization, of legitimate treachery. He had dreamed for years of producing something which should bear the stamp of the psychologist as well as of the painter, and here at last was his subject. It was a pity it was not better, but that was not his fault. It was his impression that already no one drew the Colonel out more than he, and he did it not only by instinct but on a plan. There were moments when he was almost frightened at the success of his plan—the poor gentleman went so terribly far. He would pull up some day, look at Lyon between the eyes—guess he was being played upon—which would lead to his wife's guessing it also. Not that Lyon cared much for that, however, so long as she failed to suppose (as she must) that she was a part of his joke. He formed such a habit now of going to see her of a Sunday afternoon that he was angry when she went out of town. This occurred often, as the couple were great visitors and the Colonel was always looking for sport, which he liked best when it could be had at other people's expense. Lyon would have supposed that this sort of life was particularly little to her taste, for he had an idea that it was in country-houses that her husband came out strongest. To let him go off without her, not to see him expose himself—that ought properly to have been a relief and a luxury to her. She told Lyon in

fact that she preferred staying at home; but she neglected to say it was because in other people's houses she was on the rack: the reason she gave was that she liked so to be with the child. It was not perhaps criminal to draw such a bow, but it was vulgar: poor Lyon was delighted when he arrived at that formula. Certainly some day too he would cross the line—he would become a noxious animal. Yes, in the meantime he was vulgar, in spite of his talents, his fine person, his impunity. Twice, by exception, toward the end of the winter, when he left town for a few days' hunting, his wife remained at home. Lyon had not yet reached the point of asking himself whether the desire not to miss two of his visits had something to do with her immobility. That inquiry would perhaps have been more in place later, when he began to paint the child and she always came with her. But it was not in her to give the wrong name, to pretend, and Lyon could see that she had the maternal passion, in spite of the bad blood in the little girl's veins.

She came inveterately, though Lyon multiplied the sittings: Amy was never intrusted to the governess or the maid. He had knocked off poor old Sir David in ten days, but the portrait of the simple-faced child bade fair to stretch over into the following year. He asked for sitting after sitting, and it would have struck any one who might have witnessed the affair that he was wearing the little girl out. He knew better, however, and Mrs. Capadose also knew: they were present together at the long intermissions he gave her, when she left her pose and roamed about the great studio, amus-

ing herself with its curiosities, playing with the old draperies and costumes, having unlimited leave to handle. Then her mother and Mr. Lyon sat and talked; he laid aside his brushes and leaned back in his chair; he always gave her tea. What Mrs. Capadose did not know was the way that during these weeks he neglected other orders: women have no faculty of imagination with regard to a man's work beyond a vague idea that it doesn't matter. In fact Lyon put off everything and made several celebrities wait. There were half-hours of silence, when he plied his brushes, during which he was mainly conscious that Everina was sitting there. She easily fell into that if he did not insist on talking, and she was not embarrassed nor bored by it. Sometimes she took up a book—there were plenty of them about; sometimes, a little way off, in her chair, she watched his progress (though without in the least advising or correcting), as if she cared for every stroke that represented her daughter. These strokes were occasionally a little wild; he was thinking so much more of his heart than of his hand. He was not more embarrassed than she was, but he was agitated: it was as if in the sittings (for the child, too, was beautifully quiet) something was growing between them or had already grown—a tacit confidence, an inexpressible secret. He felt it that way; but after all he could not be sure that she did. What he wanted her to do for him was very little; it was not even to confess that she was unhappy. He would be superabundantly gratified if she should simply let him know, even by a silent sign, that she recognized that with him

her life would have been finer. Sometimes he guessed —his presumption went so far—that he might see this sign in her contentedly sitting there.

III

At last he broached the question of painting the Colonel: it was now very late in the season—there would be little time before the general dispersal. He said they must make the most of it; the great thing was to begin; then in the autumn, with the resumption of their London life, they could go forward. Mrs. Capadose objected to this that she really could not consent to accept another present of such value. Lyon had given her the portrait of herself of old and he had seen what they had had the indelicacy to do with it. Now he had offered her this beautiful memorial of the child—beautiful it would evidently be when it was finished, if he could ever satisfy himself; a precious possession which they would cherish forever. But his generosity must stop there—they couldn't be so tremendously "beholden" to him. They couldn't order the picture—of course he would understand that, without her explaining: it was a luxury beyond their reach, for they knew the great prices he received. Besides, what had they ever done—what above all had she ever done—that he should overload them with benefits? No, he was too dreadfully good; it was really impossible that Clement should sit. Lyon listened to her without protest, without interruption, while he bent forward at his work, and at last he said: "Well, if you won't take it, why not let him sit for me for my own pleasure and

profit? Let it be a favor, a service I ask of him. It will do me a lot of good to paint him and the picture will remain in my hands."

"How will it do you a lot of good?" Mrs. Capadose asked.

"Why, he's such a rare model—such an interesting subject. He has such an expressive face. It will teach me no end of things."

"Expressive of what?" said Mrs. Capadose.

"Why, of his nature."

"And do you want to paint his nature?"

"Of course I do. That's what a great portrait gives you, and I shall make the Colonel's a great one. It will put me up high. So you see my request is eminently interested."

"How can you be higher than you are?"

"Oh, I'm insatiable! Do consent," said Lyon.

"Well, his nature is very noble," Mrs. Capadose remarked.

"Ah, trust me, I shall bring it out!" Lyon exclaimed, feeling a little ashamed of himself.

Mrs. Capadose said before she went away that her husband would probably comply with his invitation, but she added, "Nothing would induce me to let you pry into *me* that way!"

"Oh, you," Lyon laughed—"I could do you in the dark!"

The Colonel shortly afterward placed his leisure at the painter's disposal and by the end of July had paid him several visits. Lyon was disappointed neither in the quality of his sitter nor in the degree to which he

himself rose to the occasion; he felt really confident that he should produce a fine thing. He was in the humor; he was charmed with his *motif* and deeply interested in his problem. The only point that troubled him was the idea that when he should send his picture to the Academy he should not be able to give the title, for the catalogue, simply as "The Liar." However, it little mattered, for he had now determined that this character should be perceptible even to the meanest intelligence—as overtopping as it had become to his own sense in the living man. As he saw nothing else in the Colonel to-day, so he gave himself up to the joy of painting nothing else. How he did it he could not have told you, but it seemed to him that the mystery of how to do it was revealed to him afresh every time he sat down to his work. It was in the eyes and it was in the mouth, it was in every line of the face and every fact of the attitude, in the indentation of the chin, in the way the hair was planted, the mustache was twisted, the smile came and went, the breath rose and fell. It was in the way he looked out at a bamboozled world in short—the way he would look out forever. There were half a dozen portraits in Europe that Lyon rated as supreme; he regarded them as immortal, for they were as perfectly preserved as they were consummately painted. It was to this small exemplary group that he aspired to annex the canvas on which he was now engaged. One of the productions that helped to compose it was the magnificent Moroni of the National Gallery—the young tailor, in the white jacket, at his board with his shears. The Colonel was

not a tailor, nor was Moroni's model, unlike many tailors, a liar; but as regards the masterly clearness with which the individual should be rendered his work should be on the same line as that. He had to a degree in which he had rarely had it before the satisfaction of feeling life grow and grow under his brush. The Colonel, as it turned out, liked to sit and he liked to talk while he was sitting: which was very fortunate, as his talk largely constituted Lyon's inspiration. Lyon put into practice that idea of drawing him out which he had been nursing for so many weeks: he could not possibly have been in a better relation to him for the purpose. He encouraged, beguiled, excited him, manifested an unfathomable credulity, and his only interruptions were when the Colonel did not respond to it. He had his intermissions, his hours of sterility, and then Lyon felt that the picture also languished. The higher his companion soared, the more gyrations he executed, in the blue, the better he painted; he couldn't make his flights long enough. He lashed him on when he flagged; his apprehension became great at moments that the Colonel would discover his game. But he never did, apparently; he basked and expanded in the fine steady light of the painter's attention. In this way the picture grew very fast; it was astonishing what a short business it was, compared with the little girl's. By the fifth of August it was pretty well finished: that was the date of the last sitting the Colonel was for the present able to give, as he was leaving town the next day with his wife. Lyon was amply content—he saw his way so clear: he should be able

to do at his convenience what remained, with or without his friend's attendance. At any rate, as there was no hurry, he would let the thing stand over till his own return to London, in November, when he would come back to it with a fresh eye. On the Colonel's asking him if his wife might come and see it the next day, if she should find a minute—this was so greatly her desire—Lyon begged as a special favor that she would wait: he was so far from satisfied as yet. This was the repetition of a proposal Mrs. Capadose had made on the occasion of his last visit to her, and he had then asked for a delay—declared that he was by no means content. He was really delighted, and he was again a little ashamed of himself.

By the fifth of August the weather was very warm, and on that day, while the Colonel sat straight and gossiped, Lyon opened for the sake of ventilation a little subsidiary door which led directly from his studio into the garden and sometimes served as an entrance and as an exit for models and for visitors of the humbler sort, and as a passage for canvases, frames, packing-boxes and other professional gear. The main entrance was through the house and his own apartments, and this approach had the charming effect of admitting you first to a high gallery, from which a crooked picturesque staircase enabled you to descend to the wide, decorated, incumbered room. The view of this room, beneath them, with all its artistic ingenuities and the objects of value that Lyon had collected, never failed to elicit exclamations of delight from persons stepping into the gallery. The way from the garden was

plainer and at once more practicable and more private. Lyon's domain, in St. John's Wood, was not vast, but when the door stood open of a summer's day it offered a glimpse of flowers and trees, you smelled something sweet and you heard the birds. On this particular morning the side-door had been found convenient by an unannounced visitor, a youngish woman who stood in the room before the Colonel perceived her and whom he perceived before she was noticed by his friend. She was very quiet, and she looked from one of the men to the other. "Oh, dear, here's another!" Lyon exclaimed, as soon as his eyes rested on her. She belonged, in fact, to a somewhat importunate class—the model in search of employment—and she explained that she had ventured to come straight in, that way, because very often when she went to call upon gentlemen the servants played her tricks, turned her off and wouldn't take in her name.

"But how did you get into the garden?" Lyon asked.

"The gate was open, sir—the servants' gate. The butcher's cart was there."

"The butcher ought to have closed it," said Lyon.

"Then you don't require me, sir?" the lady continued.

Lyon went on with his painting; he had given her a sharp look at first, but now his eyes lighted on her no more. The Colonel, however, examined her with interest. She was a person of whom you could scarcely say whether being young she looked old or old she looked young; she had at any rate evidently rounded

several of the corners of life and had a face that was rosy, but that somehow failed to suggest freshness. Nevertheless she was pretty and even looked as if at one time she might have sat for the complexion. She wore a hat with many feathers, a dress with many bugles, long black gloves, encircled with silver bracelets, and very bad shoes. There was something about her that was not exactly of the governess out of place nor completely of the actress seeking an engagement, but that savored of an interrupted profession or even of a blighted career. She was rather soiled and tarnished, and after she had been in the room a few moments the air, or at any rate the nostril, became acquainted with a certain alcoholic waft. She was unpracticed in the *h*, and when Lyon at last thanked her and said he didn't want her—he was doing nothing for which she could be useful—she replied with rather a wounded manner, "Well, you know you 'ave 'ad me!"

"I don't remember you," Lyon answered.

"Well, I daresay the people that saw your pictures do! I haven't much time, but I thought I would look in."

"I am much obliged to you."

"If ever you should require me, if you just send me a postcard—"

"I never send postcards," said Lyon.

"Oh, well, I should value a private letter! Anything to Miss Geraldine, Mortimer Terrace Mews, Notting 'ill—"

"Very good; I'll remember," said Lyon.

Miss Geraldine lingered. "I thought I'd just stop, on the chance."

"I'm afraid I can't hold out hopes, I'm so busy with portraits," Lyon continued.

"Yes; I see you are. I wish I was in the gentleman's place."

"I'm afraid in that case it wouldn't look like me," said the Colonel, laughing.

"Oh, of course it couldn't compare—it wouldn't be so 'andsome! But I do hate them portraits!" Miss Geraldine declared. "It's so much bread out of our mouths."

"Well, there are many who can't paint them," Lyon suggested comfortingly.

"Oh, I've sat to the very first—and only to the first! There's many that couldn't do anything without me."

"I'm glad you're in such demand." Lyon was beginning to be bored and he added that he wouldn't detain her—he would send for her in case of need.

"Very well; remember it's the Mews—more's the pity! You don't sit so well as us!" Miss Geraldine pursued, looking at the Colonel. "If you should require me, sir—"

"You put him out; you embarrass him," said Lyon.

"Embarrass him, oh gracious!" the visitor cried, with a laugh which diffused a fragrance. "Perhaps you send postcards, eh?" she went on to the Colonel; and then she retreated with a wavering step. She passed out into the garden as she had come.

"How very dreadful—she's drunk!" said Lyon. He was painting hard, but he looked up, checking himself:

Miss Geraldine, in the open doorway, had thrust back her head.

"Yes, I do hate it—that sort of thing!" she cried with an explosion of mirth which confirmed Lyon's declaration. And then she disappeared.

"What sort of thing—what does she mean?" the Colonel asked.

"Oh, my painting you, when I might be painting her."

"And have you ever painted her?"

"Never in the world; I have never seen her. She is quite mistaken."

The Colonel was silent a moment; then he remarked, "She was very pretty—ten years ago."

"I daresay, but she's quite ruined. For me the least drop too much spoils them; I shouldn't care for her at all."

"My dear fellow, she's not a model," said the Colonel, laughing.

"To-day, no doubt, she's not worthy of the name; but she has been one."

"*Jamais de la vie!* That's all a pretext."

"A pretext?" Lyon pricked up his ears—he began to wonder what was coming now.

"She didn't want you—she wanted me."

"I noticed she paid you some attention. What does she want of you?"

"Oh, to do me an ill turn. She hates me—lots of women do. She's watching me—she follows me."

Lyon leaned back in his chair—he didn't believe a

word of this. He was all the more delighted with it and with the Colonel's bright candid manner. The story had bloomed, fragrant, on the spot. "My dear Colonel!" he murmured, with friendly interest and commiseration.

"I was annoyed when she came in—but I wasn't startled," his sitter continued.

"You concealed it very well, if you were."

"Ah, when one has been through what I have! To-day, however, I confess I was half prepared. I have seen her hanging about—she knows my movements. She was near my house this morning—she must have followed me."

"But who is she then—with such a *toupet?*"

"Yes, she has that," said the Colonel, "but, as you observe, she was primed. Still, there was a cheek, as they say, in her coming in. Oh, she's a bad one! She isn't a model and she never was; no doubt she has known some of those women and picked up their form. She had hold of a friend of mine ten years ago—a stupid young gander who might have been left to be plucked, but whom I was obliged to take an interest in for family reasons. It's a long story—I had really forgotten all about it. She's thirty-seven if she's a day. I cut in and made him get rid of her—I sent her about her business. She knew it was me she had to thank. She has never forgiven me—I think she's off her head. Her name isn't Geraldine at all and I doubt very much if that's her address."

"Ah, what is her name?" Lyon asked, most attentive. The details always began to multiply, to

abound, when once his companion was well launched —they flowed forth in battalions.

"It's Pearson—Harriet Pearson; but she used to call herself Grenadine—wasn't that a rum appellation? Grenadine—Geraldine—the jump was easy." Lyon was charmed with the promptitude of this response, and his interlocutor went on: "I hadn't thought of her for years—I had quite lost sight of her. I don't know what her idea is, but practically she's harmless. As I came in I thought I saw her a little way up the road. She must have found out I come here and have arrived before me. I daresay —or rather I'm sure—she's waiting for me there now."

"Hadn't you better have protection?" Lyon asked, laughing.

"The best protection is five shillings—I'm willing to go that length. Unless indeed she has a bottle of vitriol. But they only throw vitriol on the men who have deceived them, and I never deceived her—I told her the first time I saw her that it wouldn't do. Oh, if she's there we'll walk a little way together and talk it over, and, as I say, I'll go as far as five shillings."

"Well," said Lyon, "I'll contribute another five." He felt that this was little to pay for his entertainment.

That entertainment was interrupted, however, for the time by the Colonel's departure. Lyon hoped for a letter recounting the fictive sequel; but apparently his brilliant sitter did not operate with the pen. At

any rate, he left town without writing; they had taken a rendezvous for three months later. Oliver Lyon always passed the holidays in the same way; during the first weeks he paid a visit to his elder brother, the happy possessor, in the south of England, of a rambling old house with formal gardens, in which he delighted, and then he went abroad—usually to Italy or Spain. This year he carried out his custom after taking a last look at his all but finished work and feeling as nearly pleased with it as he ever felt with the translation of the idea by the hand—always, as it seemed to him, a pitiful compromise. One yellow afternoon, in the country, as he was smoking his pipe on one of the old terraces, he was seized with the desire to see it again and do two or three things more to it: he had thought of it so often while he lounged there. The impulse was too strong to be dismissed, and though he expected to return to town in the course of another week, he was unable to face the delay. To look at the picture for five minutes would be enough—it would clear up certain questions which hummed in his brain; so that the next morning, to give himself this luxury, he took the train for London. He sent no word in advance; he would lunch at his club and probably return into Sussex by the 5.45.

In St. John's Wood the tide of human life flows at no time very fast, and in the first days of September Lyon found unmitigated emptiness in the straight sunny roads where the little plastered garden-walls, with their incommunicative doors, looked slightly Oriental. There was definite stillness in his own

house, to which he admitted himself by his pass-key, having a theory that it was well sometimes to take servants unprepared. The good woman who was mainly in charge and who cumulated the functions of cook and housekeeper was, however, quickly summoned by his step, and (he cultivated frankness of intercourse with his domestics) received him without the confusion of surprise. He told her that she needn't mind the place being not quite straight, he had only come up for a few hours—he should be busy in the studio. To this she replied that he was just in time to see a lady and a gentleman who were there at the moment—they had arrived five minutes before. She had told them he was away from home; but they said it was all right; they only wanted to look at a picture and would be very careful of everything. "I hope it is all right, sir?" the housekeeper concluded. "The gentleman says he's a sitter and he gave me his name—rather an odd name; I think it's military. The lady's a very fine lady, sir; at any rate, there they are."

"Oh, it's all right," Lyon said, the identity of his visitors being clear. The good woman couldn't know, for she usually had little to do with the comings and goings; his man, who showed people in and out, had accompanied him to the country. He was a good deal surprised at Mrs. Capadose's having come to see her husband's portrait when she knew that the artist himself wished her to forbear; but it was a familiar truth to him that she was a woman of a high spirit. Besides, perhaps the lady was not Mrs. Capadose; the

Colonel might have brought some inquisitive friend, a person who wanted a portrait of *her* husband. What were they doing in town, at any rate, at that moment. Lyon made his way to the studio with a certain curiosity; he wondered vaguely what his friends were "up to." He pushed aside the curtain that hung in the door of communication—the door opening upon the gallery which it had been found convenient to construct at the time the studio was added to the house. When I say he pushed it aside I should amend my phrase; he laid his hand upon it, but at that moment he was arrested by a singular sound. It came from the floor of the room beneath him and it startled him extremely, consisting apparently as it did of a passionate wail—a sort of smothered shriek —accompanied by a violent burst of tears. Oliver Lyon listened intently a moment, and then he passed out upon the balcony, which was covered with an old thick Moorish rug. His step was noiseless, though he had not endeavored to make it so, and after that first instant he found himself profiting irresistibly by the accident of his not having attracted the attention of the two persons in the studio, who were some twenty feet below him. In truth, they were so deeply and so strangely engaged that their unconsciousness of observation was explained. The scene that took place before Lyon's eyes was one of the most extraordinary they had ever rested upon. Delicacy and the failure to comprehend kept him at first from interrupting it—for what he saw was a woman who had thrown herself in a flood of tears on her companion's

bosom—and these influences were succeeded after a minute (the minutes were very few and very short) by a definite motive which presently had the force to make him step back behind the curtain. I may add that it also had the force to make him avail himself for further contemplation of a crevice formed by his gathering together the two halves of the *portière*. He was perfectly aware of what he was about—he was for the moment an eavesdropper, a spy; but he was also aware that a very odd business, in which his confidence had been trifled with, was going forward, and that if in a measure it didn't concern him, in a measure it very definitely did. His observation, his reflections, accomplished themselves in a flash.

His visitors were in the middle of the room; Mrs. Capadose clung to her husband, weeping, sobbing as if her heart would break. Her distress was horrible to Oliver Lyon, but his astonishment was greater than his horror when he heard the Colonel respond to it by the words, vehemently uttered, "Damn him, damn him, damn him!" What in the world had happened? why was she sobbing and whom was he damning? What had happened, Lyon saw the next instant, was that the Colonel had finally rummaged out his unfinished portrait (he knew the corner where the artist usually placed it, out of the way, with its face to the wall) and had set it up before his wife on an empty easel. She had looked at it a few moments and then—apparently—what she saw in it had produced an explosion of dismay and resentment. She was too busy sobbing and the Colonel was too busy holding her and reiterat-

ing his objurgation to look round or look up. The scene was so unexpected to Lyon that he could not take it, on the spot, as a proof of the triumph of his hand—of a tremendous hit: he could only wonder what on earth was the matter. The idea of the triumph came a little later. Yet he could see the portrait from where he stood; he was startled with its look of life—he had not thought it so masterly. Mrs. Capadose flung herself away from her husband—she dropped into the nearest chair, buried her face in her arms, leaning on a table. Her weeping suddenly ceased to be audible, but she shuddered there as if she were overwhelmed with anguish and shame. Her husband remained a moment staring at the picture; then he went to her, bent over her, took hold of her again, soothed her. "What is it, darling, what the devil is it?" he demanded.

Lyon heard her answer. "It's cruel—oh, it's too cruel!"

"Damn him—damn him—damn him!" the Colonel repeated.

"It's all there—it's all there!" Mrs. Capadose went on.

"Hang it, what's all there?"

"Everything there oughtn't to be—everything he has seen—it's too dreadful!"

"Everything he has seen? Why, ain't I a good-looking fellow? He has made me rather handsome."

Mrs. Capadose had sprung up again; she had darted another glance at the painted betrayal. "Handsome? Hideous, hideous! Not that—never, never!"

"Not *what,* in heaven's name?" the Colonel almost shouted. Lyon could see his flushed, bewildered face.

"What he has made of you—what you know! *He* knows—he has seen. Every one will know—every one will see. Fancy that thing in the Academy!"

"You're going wild, darling; but if you hate it so it needn't go."

"Oh, he'll send it—it's so good! Come away—come away!" Mrs. Capadose wailed, seizing her husband.

"It's so good?" the poor man cried.

"Come away—come way," she only repeated; and she turned toward the staircase that ascended to the gallery.

"Not that way—not through the house, in the state you're in," Lyon heard the Colonel object. "This way—we can pass," he added; and he drew his wife to the small door that opened into the garden. It was bolted, but he pushed the bolt and opened the door.

She passed out quickly, but he stood there looking back into the room. "Wait for me a moment!" he cried out to her; and with an excited stride he reentered the studio. He came up to the picture again, and again he stood looking at it. "Damn him—damn him—damn him!" he broke out once more. It was not clear to Lyon whether this malediction had for its object the original or the painter of the portrait. The Colonel turned away and moved rapidly about the room, as if he were looking for something; Lyon was

unable for the instant to guess his intention. Then the artist said to himself, below his breath, "He's going to do it a harm!" His first impulse was to rush down and stop him; but he paused, with the sound of Everina Brant's sobs still in his ears. The Colonel found what he was looking for—found it among some odds and ends on a small table and rushed back with it to the easel. At one and the same moment Lyon perceived that the object he had seized was a small Eastern dagger and that he had plunged it into the canvas. He seemed animated by a sudden fury, for with extreme vigor of hand he dragged the instrument down (Lyon knew it to have no very fine edge), making a long, abominable gash. Then he plucked it out and dashed it again several times into the face of the likeness, exactly as if he were stabbing a human victim: it had the oddest effect—that of a sort of figurative suicide. In a few seconds more the Colonel had tossed the dagger away—he looked at it as he did so, as if he expected it to reek with blood—and hurried out of the place, closing the door after him.

The strangest part of all was—as will doubtless appear—that Oliver Lyon made no movement to save his picture. But he did not feel as if he were losing it or cared not if he were, so much more did he feel that he was gaining a certitude. His old friend *was* ashamed of her husband, and he had made her so, and he had scored a great success, even though the picture had been reduced to rags. The revelation excited him so—as indeed the whole scene did—that when he came down the steps after the Colonel had gone he

trembled with his happy agitation; he was dizzy and had to sit down a moment. The portrait had a dozen jagged wounds—the Colonel literally had hacked it to death. Lyon left it where it was, never touched it, scarcely looked at it; he only walked up and down his studio, still excited, for an hour. At the end of this time his good woman came to recommend that he should have some luncheon; there was a passage under the staircase from the offices.

"Ah, the lady and gentleman have gone, sir? I didn't hear them."

"Yes; they went by the garden."

But she had stopped, staring at the picture on the easel. "Gracious, how you *'ave* served it, sir!"

Lyon imitated the Colonel. "Yes, I cut it up—in a fit of disgust."

"Mercy, after all your trouble! Because they weren't pleased, sir?"

"Yes; they weren't pleased."

"Well, they must be very grand! Blessed if I would!"

"Have it chopped up; it will do to light fires," Lyon said.

He returned to the country by the 3.30 and a few days later passed over to France. During the two months that he was absent from England he expected something—he could hardly have said what; a manifestation of some sort on the Colonel's part. Wouldn't he write, wouldn't he explain, wouldn't he take for granted Lyon had discovered the way he had, as the cook said, served him and deem it only decent to take

pity in some fashion or other on his mystification? Would he plead guilty or would he repudiate suspicion? The latter course *would* be difficult and make a considerable draft upon his genius, in view of the certain testimony of Lyon's housekeeper, who had admitted the visitors and would establish the connection between their presence and the violence wrought. Would the Colonel proffer some apology or some amends, or would any word from him be only a further expression of that destructive petulance which our friend had seen his wife so suddenly and so potently communicate to him? He would have either to declare that he had not touched the picture or to admit that he had; and in either case he would have to tell a fine story. Lyon was impatient for the story and, as no letter came, disappointed that it was not produced. His impatience, however, was much greater in respect to Mrs. Capadose's version, if version there was to be; for certainly that would be the real test, would show how far she would go for her husband, on the one side, or for him, Oliver Lyon, on the other. He could scarcely wait to see what line she would take; whether she would simply adopt the Colonel's, whatever it might be. He wanted to draw her out without waiting to get an idea in advance. He wrote to her, to this end, from Venice, in the tone of their established friendship, asking for news, narrating his wanderings, hoping they should soon meet in town and not saying a word about the picture. Day followed day, after the time, and he received no answer; upon which he reflected that she couldn't trust herself to write—was

still too much under the influence of the emotion produced by his "betrayal." Her husband had espoused that emotion and she had espoused the action he had taken in consequence of it, and it was a complete rupture and everything was at an end. Lyon considered this prospect rather ruefully, at the same time that he thought it deplorable that such charming people should have put themselves so grossly in the wrong. He was at last cheered, though little further enlightened, by the arrival of a letter, brief, but breathing good-humor and hinting neither at a grievance nor at a bad conscience. The most interesting part of it to Lyon was the postscript, which consisted of these words: "I have a confession to make to you. We were in town for a couple of days, the 1st of September, and I took the occasion to defy authority—it was very bad of me, but I couldn't help it. I made Clement take me to your studio—I wanted so dreadfully to see what you had done with him, your wishes to the contrary notwithstanding. We made your servants let us in and I took a good look at the picture. It is really wonderful!" "Wonderful" was non-committal, but at least with this letter there was no rupture.

The third day after Lyon's return to London was a Sunday, so that he could go and ask Mrs. Capadose for luncheon. She had given him in the spring a general invitation to do so and he had availed himself of it several times. These had been the occasions (before he sat to him) when he saw the Colonel most familiarly. Directly after the meal his host disappeared (he went out, as he said, to call on *his* women) and the

second half-hour was the best, even when there were other people. Now, in the first days of December, Lyon had the luck to find the pair alone, without even Amy, who appeared but little in public. They were in the drawing-room, waiting for the repast to be announced, and as soon as he came in the Colonel broke out, "My dear fellow, I'm delighted to see you! I'm so keen to begin again."

"Oh, do go on, it's so beautiful," Mrs. Capadose said, as she gave him her hand.

Lyon looked from one to the other; he didn't know what he had expected, but he had not expected this. "Ah, then, you think I've got something?"

"You've got everything," said Mrs. Capadose, smiling from her golden-brown eyes.

"She wrote you of our little crime?" her husband asked. "She dragged me there—I had to go!" Lyon wondered for a moment whether he meant by their little crime the assault on the canvas; but the Colonel's next words didn't confirm this interpretation. "You know I like to sit—it gives such a chance to my *bavardise*. And just now I have time."

"You must remember I had almost finished," Lyon remarked.

"So you had. More's the pity. I should like you to begin again."

"My dear fellow, I shall have to begin again!" said Oliver Lyon with a laugh, looking at Mrs. Capadose. She did not meet his eyes—she had got up to ring for luncheon. "The picture has been smashed," Lyon continued.

"Smashed? Ah, what did you do that for?" Mrs. Capadose asked, standing there before him in all her clear, rich beauty. Now that she looked at him she was impenetrable.

"I didn't—I found it so—with a dozen holes punched in it!"

"I say!" cried the Colonel.

Lyon turned his eyes to him, smiling. "I hope *you* didn't do it?"

"Is it ruined?" the Colonel inquired. He was as brightly true as his wife and he looked simply as if Lyon's question could not be serious. "For the love of sitting to you? My dear fellow, if I had thought of it, I would!"

"Nor you either?" the painter demanded of Mrs. Capadose.

Before she had time to reply her husband had seized her arm, as if a highly suggestive idea had come to him. "I say, my dear, that woman—that woman!"

"That woman?" Mrs. Capadose repeated; and Lyon, too, wondered what woman he meant.

"Don't you remember when we came out, she was at the door—or a little way from it? I spoke to you of her—I told you about her. Geraldine—Grenadine—the one who burst in that day," he explained to Lyon. "We saw her hanging about—I called Everina's attention to her."

"Do you mean she got at my picture?"

"Ah, yes, I remember," said Mrs. Capadose, with a sigh.

"She burst in again—she had learned the way—

she was waiting for her chance," the Colonel continued. "Ah, the little brute!"

Lyon looked down; he felt himself coloring. This was what he had been waiting for—the day the Colonel should wantonly sacrifice some innocent person. And could his wife be a party to that final atrocity? Lyon had reminded himself repeatedly during the previous weeks that when the Colonel perpetrated his misdeed she had already quitted the room; but he had argued none the less—it was a virtual certainty—that he had on rejoining her immediately made his achievement plain to her. He was in the flush of performance; and even if he had not mentioned what he had done she would have guessed it. He did not for an instant believe that poor Miss Geraldine had been hovering about his door, nor had the account given by the Colonel the summer before of his relations with this lady deceived him in the slightest degree. Lyon had never seen her before the day she planted herself in his studio; but he knew her and classified her as if he had made her. He was acquainted with the London female model and all her varieties—in every phase of her development and every step of her decay. When he entered his house that September morning, just after the arrival of his two friends, there had been no symptoms whatever, up and down the road, of Miss Geraldine's reappearance. That fact had been fixed in his mind by his recollecting the vacancy of the prospect when his cook told him that a lady and a gentleman were in his studio: he had wondered there was not a carriage nor a cab at his door. Then he re-

flected that they would have come by the underground railway; he was close to the Marlborough Road station, and he knew the Colonel, coming to his sittings, more than once had availed himself of that convenience. "How in the world did she get in?" He addressed the question to his companions indifferently.

"Let us go down to luncheon," said Mrs. Capadose, passing out of the room.

"We went by the garden—without troubling your servant—I wanted to show my wife." Lyon followed his hostess with her husband, and the Colonel stopped him at the top of the stairs. "My dear fellow, I *can't* have been guilty of the folly of not fastening the door?"

"I am sure I don't know, Colonel," Lyon said as they went down. "It was a very determined hand —a perfect wild-cat."

"Well, she *is* a wild-cat—confound her! That's why I wanted to get him away from her."

"But I don't understand her motive."

"She's off her head—and she hates me; that was her motive."

"But she doesn't hate me, my dear fellow!" Lyon said, laughing.

"She hated the picture—don't you remember she said so? The more portraits there are the less employment for such as her."

"Yes; but if she is not really the model she pretends to be, how can that hurt her?" Lyon asked.

The inquiry baffled the Colonel an instant—but only

an instant. "Ah, she was in a vicious muddle! As I say, she's off her head."

They went into the dining-room, where Mrs. Capadose was taking her place. "It's too bad, it's too horrid!" she said. "You see the fates are against you. Providence won't let you be so disinterested—painting masterpieces for nothing."

"Did *you* see the woman?" Lyon demanded, with something like a sternness that he could not mitigate.

Mrs. Capadose appeared not to perceive it, or not to heed it if she did. "There was a person, not far from your door, whom Clement called my attention to. He told me something about her, but we were going the other way."

"And do you think she did it?"

"How can I tell? If she did she was mad, poor wretch."

"I should like very much to get hold of her," said Lyon. This was a false statement, for he had no desire for any further conversation with Miss Geraldine. He had exposed his friends to himself, but he had no desire to expose them to any one else, least of all to themselves.

"Oh, depend upon it she will never show again. You're safe!" the Colonel exclaimed.

"But I remember her address—Mortimer Terrace Mews, Notting Hill."

"Oh, that's pure humbug; there isn't any such place."

"Lord, what a deceiver!" said Lyon.

"Is there any one else you suspect?" the Colonel went on.

"Not a creature."

"And what do your servants say?"

"They say it wasn't *them,* and I reply that I never said it was. That's about the substance of our conferences."

"And when did they discover the havoc?"

"They never discovered it at all. I noticed it first —when I came back."

"Well, she could easily have stepped in," said the Colonel. "Don't you remember how she turned up that day, like the clown in the ring?"

"Yes, yes; she could have done the job in three seconds, except that the picture wasn't out."

"My dear fellow, don't curse me!—but of course I dragged it out."

"You didn't put it back?" Lyon asked tragically.

"Ah, Clement, Clement, didn't I tell you to?" Mrs. Capadose exclaimed in a tone of exquisite reproach.

The Colonel groaned, dramatically; he covered his face with his hands. His wife's words were for Lyon the finishing touch; they made his whole vision crumble—his theory that she had secretly kept herself true. Even to her old lover she wouldn't be so! He was sick: he couldn't eat; he knew that he looked very strange. He murmured something about it being useless to cry over spilled milk—he tried to turn the conversation to other things. But it was a horrid effort, and he wondered whether they felt it as much as he. He wondered all sorts of things: whether they guessed

he disbelieved them (that he had seen them of course they would never guess); whether they had arranged their story in advance or it was only on inspiration of the moment; whether she had resisted, protested, when the Colonel proposed it to her, and then had been borne down by him; whether, in short, she didn't loathe herself as she sat there. The cruelty, the cowardice of fastening their unholy act upon the wretched woman struck him as monstrous—no less monstrous indeed than the levity that could make them run the risk of her giving them, in her righteous indignation, the lie. Of course, that risk could only exculpate her and not inculpate them—the probabilities protected them so perfectly; and what the Colonel counted on (what he would have counted upon the day he delivered himself, after first seeing her, at the studio, if he had thought about the matter then at all and not spoken from the pure spontaneity of his genius) was simply that Miss Geraldine had really vanished forever into her native unknown. Lyon wanted so much to quit the subject that when after a little Mrs. Capadose said to him, "But can nothing be done, can't the picture be repaired? You know they do such wonders in that way now," he only replied, "I don't know, I don't care, it's all over, *n'en parlons plus!*" Her hypocrisy revolted him. And yet, by way of plucking off the last veil of her shame, he broke out to her again, shortly afterward, "And you *did* like it, really?" To which she returned, looking him straight in his face, without a blush, a pallor, an evasion, "Oh, I loved it!" Truly her husband had trained her well. After that Lyon

said no more, and his companions forbore temporarily to insist, like people of tact and sympathy, aware that the odious incident had made him sore.

When they quitted the table the Colonel went away without coming upstairs; but Lyon returned to the drawing-room with his hostess, remarking to her, however, on the way that he could remain but a moment. He spent that moment—it prolonged itself a little—standing with her before the chimney-piece. She neither sat down nor asked him to; her manner denoted that she intended to go out. Yes, her husband had trained her well; yet Lyon dreamed for a moment that now he was alone with her she would perhaps break down, retract, apologize, confide, say to him, "My dear old friend, forgive this hideous comedy—you understand!" And then how he would have loved her and pitied her, guarded her, helped her always! If she were not ready to do something of that sort, why had she treated him as if he were a dear old friend; why had she let him for months suppose certain things —or almost; why had she come to his studio day after day to sit near him on the pretext of her child's portrait, as if she liked to think what might have been? Why had she come so near a tacit confession, in a word, if she was not willing to go an inch further? And she was not willing—she was not; he could see that as he lingered there. She moved about the room a little, rearranging two or three objects on the tables, but she did nothing more. Suddenly he said to her: "Which way was she going when you came out?"

"She—the woman we saw?"

"Yes, your husband's strange friend. It's a clew worth following." He had no desire to frighten her; he only wanted to communicate the impulse which would make her say, "Ah, spare me—and spare *him!* There was no such person."

Instead of this Mrs. Capadose replied, "She was going away from us—she crossed the road. We were coming toward the station."

"And did she appear to recognize the Colonel—did she look round?"

"Yes; she looked round, but I didn't notice much. A hansom came along and we got into it. It was not till then that Clement told me who she was: I remember he said that she was there for no good. I suppose we ought to have gone back."

"Yes; you would have saved the picture."

For a moment she said nothing; then she smiled. "For you, I am very sorry. But you must remember that I possess the original!"

At this Lyon turned away. "Well, I must go," he said; and he left her without any other farewell and made his way out of the house. As he went slowly up the street the sense came back to him of that first glimpse of her he had had at Stayes—the way he had seen her gaze across the table at her husband. Lyon stopped at the corner, looking vaguely up and down. He would never go back—he couldn't. She was still in love with the Colonel—he had trained her too well.

PROPERTY OF ST. MARY'S
SEMINARY JUNIOR COLLEGE

DUE

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

DATE DUE

PZ1 .P277S v. 2 c. 1
Short story classics (American) ...
Patten, William, 1868-1936, CBKC
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND LIBRARY
3 3127 00054 2499

PZ1
.P277S
v.2

v.2 12802

Patten, ed.

Short story classics (American)

S0-AIN-282